


A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO PASTORAL CARE  
WITH EMPHASIS ON THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF  
CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

by

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## DECLARATION

As required by the regulations of the University of Edinburgh, I declare that this thesis was written by myself and is the result of my own research.

Peter B. Ives  
May 1, 1978



## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

This thesis presents a new approach to pastoral care called problem-solving. Part I begins with a discussion of the nature and purpose of pastoral ministry; then looks at methods of care in the field of social work practice. Problem-solving is discussed as a comprehensive and flexible model for pastoral care; a process that can be adapted to work with individuals, groups, and the community at large, and thereby a means of expressing the social concerns of the Christian Gospel.

Part II presents a theory of human behavior for interpreting and explaining problems encountered in ministry. The theory is the product of an interdisciplinary approach which correlates insights from systematic theology with insights from the social and psychological sciences. Two fundamental units of interaction, the human relationship and the social transaction, are examined in the theological perspective. Several diagnostic tools are presented for analyzing problem situations in social and theological context.

Part III sketches in broad outline a program for pastoral ministry that integrates the three generic methods of social work practice: casework, group work, and community work into one comprehensive approach to pastoral care. In distinction from Part II, here is a theory about how behavior can be changed or modified in the act of care -- it is, in other words, practice theory. Illustrations and examples are provided which

are based on my experience as a minister and community worker in the city of Glasgow.

Part IV discusses the writings of three major pastoral theologians: Eduard Thurneysen, Thomas Oden, and Seward Hiltner. The work of each author is presented and then critiqued in regards to methodology, knowledge base, practice theory, and theological frame of reference. The preference is for a methodology which encourages two-way dialogue and correlation between theology and the human sciences; a theory of human behavior which includes insights from both psychology and the social sciences; a practice theory that can be adapted to human needs at different levels of social involvement; and a theological frame of reference which expresses the social dimensions of God's plan for the world. The purpose of this section is also to draw attention to a two-fold danger, commonly found in much of pastoral literature, of doing pastoral theology from a static, closed, and individualistic perspective or with no systematic theological frame of reference at all.

Part V seeks to avoid this two-fold danger by adopting a new theological framework for pastoral ministry. Pastoral care is described as a ministry of word-in-deed in response to a theological understanding of God's Word as God's deeds in the midst of human events. Attention is directed to the importance and purpose of the "world" in God's redemptive plan and the Church is described as an instrument of God's mission to the world.

The aims and goals of pastoral care are discussed in the context of the Kingdom of God and problem-solving is seen as a mode of preparation; a way of becoming intentional about the demands of Christian ministry. This section completes the search for a new frame of reference by offering a theology of the Word which is dynamic in perspective and social in scope.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## INTRODUCTION

This thesis began in diary form, written in bits and pieces, during the quiet moments of a long day. It was a way of reflecting upon the experiences I was having as the pastor of a small Congregational Church in the city of Glasgow, Scotland. These experiences were rich and formative, and helped to clarify my own understanding of Christian ministry and the purpose of pastoral care.

My wife, who was a native of Scotland, and I, an American, came to live in Glasgow during the summer of 1971. She had been accepted into a training program as a caseworker for the Social Work Department. I took a job as a community worker in a position created with new monies from an Urban Aid Grant and supervised by the Glasgow Social Work Services Group. The job was based at a small community center and involved activities in many arenas of community life: the organization of tenants' groups, the establishment of a community newspaper, the initiating of a children's playgroup, the planning of summer programs for teenagers, and a general sensitivity to the concerns and problems of the residents in the neighborhood. Perhaps the most important dimension of the work was simply being present in the community, sharing in the joys and sorrows, fears and frustrations of the people with whom we lived.

At the end of the first year I was called to serve as minister of a church in the neighborhood. Technically, I resigned my position as community worker but my

involvement in the community continued , unabated, throughout the entire course of my ministry. I was soon perceived by the local residents as both a community worker and a newly ordained minister of the Gospel. The two roles were not, as some might have thought, incompatible; rather, they were complementary in the best way. My work as a community worker gave me access to many homes that I might not have entered, as easily, had I first arrived in the community as a Protestant minister. At the same time, my role as a minister gave me access to certain crucial moments and events in family life that I might not have encountered as a community worker. Without initially recognizing the full impact of what was happening, it soon became apparent that the integration of both roles served to create a unique opportunity for Christian ministry in this neighborhood.

This style of ministry was important in the context of events. Many problems I encountered as a minister were similar in nature and scope to those I had seen as a community worker. The whole city of Glasgow was caught in the throes of urban renewal. Over a period of thirty years more than 100,000 obsolete tenement buildings had been demolished to make room for new 30 story high rise apartments. There had been a complete turn-over of population in many comprehensive development areas often displacing the full membership of small inner-city churches. Many problems were the result of social transition; many others, the result of social

deprivation in housing, education, recreational facilities and employment. One could not do ministry in Glasgow during these years without being acutely sensitive to the social context of human problems and the social demands of the Gospel.

While serving the Church I began to read books and articles that were available in the field of pastoral counseling and pastoral care. I felt the need for a theoretical frame of reference to give shape and direction to my own efforts at pastoral ministry. Many textbooks in the field were written by American authors whose names were familiar: Seward Hiltner, Carroll Wise, Wayne Oates, Howard Clinebell and Carl Rogers. But my reaction to these readings was that something was wrong! The theories presented did not fit with the experience I was having as a minister. Rather than being helpful these textbooks seemed to present a distorted picture of the individual in relationship to society. On the whole, little attention was given to the social context of problem situations and the complex social variables which always impinge upon human behavior. People were described and treated in isolation, self-enclosed, as islands of self-sufficient order, with minimum concern for an individual's relationship to others or to the community at large. The focus was directed inward upon feelings and not outward toward the ever-widening concentric circle of social

relationships in which the human personality is embedded. The methods suggested for pastoral care were rather narrow and unflexible in light of the complex and complicated societal problems one encountered in a city such as Glasgow. Theory simply did not make sense of the problems being faced in ministry. It wasn't just because the authors were American or that the texts were the product of the American experience; rather, I came to believe that much of the literature in the field contained a basic and fundamental misperception about the nature of the human personality.

Soon thereafter, I began to read literature in the field of another important helping profession: social work. My wife, who was a caseworker, was able to help me familiarize myself with several major schools of thought that served as a frame of reference for her own practice. I discovered a helping perspective which seemed to take seriously the social component of human problems and the societal constraints upon behavior. It was apparent that the social work tradition in Great Britain and America embodied a two-fold concern for the individual and the whole of society; for human growth and social change. The broad contours of sickness, health, and healing were described in community-wide perspective. Social workers upheld many of the corporate values and goals of Christian ministry; a concern for social justice and recognition of the corporate responsibility society has for the welfare of each of



its members. The frame of reference was balanced when describing the individual vis-à-vis the social environment and showed sensitivity to the inherent dialectic which exists between the inner and outer, the personal and societal dimensions of human life.

My attention was directed in particular, to a new unifying approach to social work called "problem-solving." Problem-solving was then rapidly becoming one of three major schools of social work practice in America. The principle theoretician was Helen Harris Perlman, the Samuel Deutsch Professor of Social Work at the University of Chicago. Perlman's approach focused on human problems in a social context. Problem-solving was presented as a method of helping persons-in-need at the junction where personal difficulties intersect with social concerns.

Here, I came to believe was a new model for a comprehensive and flexible approach to pastoral care! The problem-solving approach contained several important advantages: (1) It encouraged sensitivity to the social dimensions of human behavior; (2) it was a flexible method of social intervention which could be adapted to work with individuals, small groups, organizations, and the community at large; (3) it was a way of expressing a two-fold interest in both personal renewal and social change. Problem-solving was a comprehensive and flexible model of social intervention which could be applied to many different strategies of pastoral care.

One concern remained, however, and it was basic to

the final construction of this thesis. Was problem-solving a genuine expression of Christian ministry and thereby a vehicle for pastoral care? Was there any relationship between problem-solving and a theological understanding of what it means to do God's will in the world? The conclusion I reached was Yes! I began to view problem-solving as a way of fulfilling some of the goals and objectives of the Christian faith. As a response to God's will in our lives, problem-solving was a means of preparing the way before the coming of the Kingdom. Problem-solving, in other words, was the expression of an intentional ministry.

It would not have been possible to have written this thesis without making extensive use of models and insights drawn from sociology, psychology, social psychology and other human sciences. Problem-solving, itself, is one such model. At every stage of this work, models from the human sciences are juxtaposed with propositions and insights from systematic theology. The emphasis, throughout, is on the need for on-going dialogue and correlation of perspectives. The assumption is that all perspectives are finite and limited, including theology, and that a comprehensive understanding of human experience is only possible in the process of correlation and the cross-fertilization of ideas. To do pastoral theology without dialogue would be to cut theology off from many important sources of knowledge about the nature and dynamics of human behavior. Thus, in the following

pages, theories of interpersonal behavior as well as practice theories are developed on the basis of an exchange of insights between systematic theology and the human sciences.

The term "human sciences" appears in most chapters of this thesis. It is a generic term used to refer to all the academic disciplines which study the nature and dynamics of human behavior: psychology, sociology, social psychology, anthropology, history, political science, and linguistics. A cover-all term is helpful when one is contrasting systematic theology with other knowledge perspectives.

A number of important words used in the thesis have a different spelling in America than is found in Great Britain. In each case, I have chosen the American version when there are differences. For example, I use the spelling "neighborhood" instead of "neighbourhood"; "center" instead of "centre"; and "counseling" instead of "counselling."

Many authors use the terms "pastoral counseling" and "pastoral care" interchangeably. I have chosen to make a distinction between the two terms. In the following pages pastoral care refers to the most comprehensive aspects and dimensions of pastoral ministry and pastoral counseling is used to refer only to one specific model of pastoral care that is derived from the practice of psychotherapy.

Finally, all references to passages from Scripture



are taken from the Revised Standard Version (1952) of the Bible unless otherwise indicated. The passage reference and number are placed in brackets at the conclusion of the sentence, instead of at the bottom of the page with the other footnotes, in order to make reading easier.

PART I

A PROBLEM-SOLVING APPROACH TO PASTORAL CARE

## Chapter 1

### The Nature and Purpose of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is one form of Christian ministry, practiced by members of a church, aimed at solving problems in person-to-person, person-in-group, or persons-in-a-community-situation which stand in the way of God's plan for human fulfillment.

Pastoral care is one form of Christian ministry. Ministry (the Greek term is diakonia and means to give service or to be a servant) is, broadly speaking, the response we make to God's presence in our lives. The Bible is the story of God's actions in human history, beginning with Creation, reaching a climax in the life of Jesus Christ, and culminating with the announcement of God's Kingdom. Christian ministry is the response we make to an understanding of God's will and purpose as it is revealed in Scripture, history, and in the course of every-day events.

This understanding gives shape to the nature and function of pastoral care. Pastoral care is the doing of God's will in response to what God wills to be done. God's will is described in the Gospel with a variety of images: God is the creator of heaven and earth (Genesis 1:1); God calls us into relationship with Him through the Covenant (Genesis 15:1); God is our helper, and the upholder of life (Psalms 41:2); God loves righteousness and justice, and the earth is full of God's steadfast love (Psalms 33:5); God works justice for all who are oppressed (Psalms 103:6); and God is our refuge

and strength, a very present help in trouble (Psalms 46:1). The word "pastoral" itself comes from the Latin "pascere" meaning to feed or pasture and is derived from the Biblical imagery describing God's action as a shepherd watching over the sheep by day and night (Psalms 23).

Thus, pastoral care takes place within the context of God's actions in the world. In response, we are called to perform an action-oriented ministry of Christian service and care. This ministry is proclaimed in Scripture with the same variety of images used to describe God's will. To Moses God gave a ministry of liberation through the task of leading his people out of Egypt to the land of promise. Jesus' disciples were given a ministry of proclamation and healing. Peter's ministry focused on laying the groundwork for the early Church and the apostle Paul was given the task of mission to the Gentiles. Ministry, in other words, includes acts of healing, shepherding, helping, reconciling, supporting, nurturing, and liberating. Pastoral care is an expression of Jesus' own description of ministry when he says,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me to preach good  
news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim  
release to the captives and recovering of sight  
to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,  
to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19

#### Pastoral Care as a Problem-Solving Ministry

Pastoral care is one form of Christian ministry, practiced in conjunction with, but in distinction from

other forms such as church administration, management, teaching, worship, music, stewardship, and missions. The distinctive feature is that it is a ministry directed to human problems which are encountered within the context of the Church's life in the community. Pastoral care is a problem-solving ministry aimed at bringing the love of God to bear upon problems that are encountered in person-to-person, person-in-group, person-in-community situations. The focus is on problems that people are experiencing in their every-day interactions.

What are the problems which give shape and focus to pastoral care? Some problems are of a personal nature and affect an individual's feelings and attitudes toward life. Other problems arise in the context of family relationships and influence every member within the family group. Still others affect life in the whole neighborhood and the community at large. The prophet Isaiah describes problems as the "crooked roads" where "no one who goes in them knows peace" (Isaiah 59:8). St. Paul speaks about "the dividing walls of hostility" which have separated us from Christ and made us strangers to the covenant promise (Ephesians 2:12-14). These walls or roadblocks manifest themselves in daily life as problems.

A problem is the sign that one or more of four fundamental relationships that we have in life has been broken. The first relationship is with God and formed

in the presence of Jesus Christ. The second relationship is with ourself as a self. The third is with the other people who most significantly shape and influence the direction of our lives. The fourth is with the community as a whole. Most problems reflect the breakdown in all four relationships. Problems are symptoms of the obstacles which stand in the way of God's love in the world; the ever present reminder that the forces of sin and evil are deeply embedded in the fabric of society and within the dynamics of human interaction. "For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do" (Romans 7:18-20).

Pastoral care is Christian ministry aimed at doing the Word of God by focusing on problems which block the full realization of God's purpose. God's plan in Jesus Christ is described in the Book of Colossians as one which seeks "to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Col. 1:20). The Word of God must be heard and acted upon in concrete ways. "We must be doers of the word, not hearers only" (James 1:22). Pastoral care as a problem-solving ministry reaches out to do the will of God by doing what is possible to break down the barriers which stand in the way of human fulfillment in and through inter-relatedness. The focus is on those obstacles in society which stand in the way of God's purpose for the world.

Pastoral care, as a problem-solving process, is an



integral aspect of the ministry of the whole Church. It is an expression of the Reformation principle that the Church is a "priesthood of all believers." This principle is well known but it is often quoted in a misleading way. Robert McAfee Brown writes in The Spirit of Protestantism,

The phrase does not mean that 'every man is his own priest.' It means the opposite: 'every man is priest to every other man.' It does not imply individuality. It necessitates community.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of pastoral care, viewed in the light of this principle, can never be left to the professional clergy or counselors alone. Every member of the Christian community is responsible in some way for the conduct of pastoral ministry. A problem-solving approach makes it possible to involve the whole congregation in the process of helping and the "cure of souls."

A problem-solving ministry develops in a two-fold direction. It involves "inreach" as well as "outreach"; concern for problems within the congregation itself and concern for issues in the community at large. Instead of creating an unnecessary dichotomy between inreach and outreach, problem-solving understands both dimensions of ministry as two sides of the same coin. Traditionally, pastoral care has focused inward upon the membership of the Church in neglect of world-wide concerns. But it is a mistake to focus in one direction alone. Colin Williams writes in his book The Church,

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<sup>1</sup>Robert McAfee Brown, The Spirit of Protestantism (New York, Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 97.

Often a contrast is made between the ministry of renewal in the Church, so that the internal life of the Church is deepened, and the ministry of mission to the world, in which the church is turned outward toward the needs of the world. The point we are making is that the ministry of the church includes both, and that these two aspects are inseparable.<sup>2</sup>

### The Perspective of Pastoral Care

It is important that those involved in pastoral care are aware of the unique features of pastoral ministry in distinction from other "helping" services in society. Pastoral care as a problem-solving ministry bears many similarities to functions performed in psychiatry, guidance, educational counseling, group work and community organization. But there are fundamental differences between pastoral care and these other activities.

Pastoral care is more than just a method of problem-solving. It is a perspective that one brings to bear upon human concerns. The perspective is theological in nature and focuses not only on our relationship to ourselves and others, but also on our relationship to God and God's relationship to us. The practitioners of pastoral care share a point of view that is shaped by the insights of the Gospel and the tenets of the Christian faith. This perspective brings theological affirmations into juxtaposition with human questions and analyzes human problems from the point of view of

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<sup>2</sup>Colin W. Williams, The Church (London: Lutterworth Press, 1969), p. 102.



what God is doing in the world to make life fully human.<sup>3</sup> Pastoral care makes use of insights from the social and psychological sciences but it begins and ends with a theological understanding of God's healing acts in our midst.

Pastoral care takes place in the setting of the Church; a community of men and women held together by what they believe and share in common. The term community comes from the Latin "communitatem" meaning fellowship or shared relationships. The Church is a community where people share a common Story, a common Vision, and a common Purpose. Those who practice pastoral care have direct access to these resources of the Christian community: the opportunity for worship, communion, celebration, and fellowship. The most important resources are the members of the congregation itself when the congregation is able to create a therapeutic and caring environment for those who are sick and in need.

The focus of pastoral care is on the whole person as body (soma), soul (psyche), and spirit (pneuma). The etymological root of the New Testament word for salvation means "to make whole." Jesus' acts of healing were accompanied by the words, "Arise, go thy way, thy faith has made thee whole" (Luke 17:19 K.J.V.). To speak

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<sup>3</sup>Paul Lehmann uses the Aristotelian definition of politics: "the art of making and keeping men truly human," as a formula for expressing, in theological perspective, the goals and purpose of God's actions in the world. See Paul Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context (New York, Harper and Row, Publisher, 1963), pp. 74-101.

of being saved (sōdzō) is to suggest that the whole of human personality has been renewed in all dimensions: sexual, artistic, personal, social, and spiritual. Pastoral care may concentrate for a moment on feelings, emotions, or relationships but throughout the helping process the overall focus is on the whole person in relationship to God.

Pastoral care assumes a broad locus of responsibility for problems encountered within the context of community life. Christian ministry does not stop with the members of the Church, it reaches out to encompass the whole world. Likewise, pastoral care is not just concerned with individuals, per se, but with the conditions of society in macroscopic dimension. Seifert and Clinebell write in Personal Growth and Social Change,

Each individual, family, small group, and organization exists within a wider system of concentric systems. To change an inner-target system most effectively and permanently, one must include in his goals the changing of the next circle out, so that it can support rather than defeat the changes of the inner system, or systems.<sup>4</sup>

The Church's responsibility for keeping human life human extends to the most inclusive aspects of society and the social structure. The problems of racism, sexism, economic exploitation, and social injustice are concerns for pastoral ministry. Pastoral care is part of the Church's ministry to the broadest parameters of human

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<sup>4</sup>Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell Jr., Personal Growth and Social Change: A Guide for Ministers and Laymen as Change Agents (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 71.

society. Roger Mehl writes in an article for the World Council of Churches' Conference on Church and Society,

Precisely because of the reconciliation of which they have been the beneficiaries, of the brotherhood in Christ that has been revealed to them, Christians can desire only a society the structures of which give to every man the possibility of assuming his responsibility for other men, in which every man is called through its various institutions to be his brother's keeper. The idea of a responsible society appears to us to be an analogical transcription in the secular world of the brotherhood of the Gospel.<sup>5</sup>

The goals of pastoral care are penultimate and ultimate in nature and scope. The immediate goals are to help people to remove the obstacles which block human fulfillment in the context of community life. At this level, pastoral care shares many goals and objectives of other problem-solving disciplines. For example, Marie Jahoda, in an article entitled, "Toward a Social Psychology of Mental Health," lists three criteria for evaluating positive mental health: (a) the ability to adjust to and master one's social environment; (b) a stable and integrated personality; and (c) the ability to perceive the world correctly.<sup>6</sup> These

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<sup>5</sup>Roger Mehl, "The Basis of Christian Social Ethics," in John Bennett, ed., Christian Social Ethics in a Changing World (New York, Association Press, 1966), p. 56.

<sup>6</sup>Marie Jahoda, "Toward a Social Psychology of Mental Health," in Arnold Rose, ed., Mental Health and Mental Disorder: A Sociological Approach (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1956), pp. 556-577.

goals are not antithetical to the overall objectives of pastoral care; rather pastoral ministry includes the goals of positive mental health within its own scope and direction.

The general goals of pastoral care, however, are defined by God's plan for the fullness of time and thus are as broad and comprehensive as the domain of God's Kingdom. God's plan for the world is to establish the Kingdom of Shalom: "when salvation will be forever and deliverance will never end" (Isaiah 51:6). Shalom implies peace, justice, and harmony within the whole of society. Shalom is a social condition in that it involves relationships between people; it is a political condition in that it entails God's sovereignty over the "principalities and powers"; and it is a universal reality that encompasses the whole world. The ultimate goals of pastoral care are shaped by a theological understanding of the demands of this Kingdom.

#### The Common Elements Between Pastoral Care and Other Helping Disciplines

Despite the differences, pastoral care shares common elements with other healing arts and disciplines. Social workers use the term "generic" to express the common core of values, knowledge, and skills shared by all practitioners in their own field. There are generic values, insights, and skills common to all helping professions. Harriet Bartlett writes,

When professions are compared, it can be seen that each has its own particular combination of values,



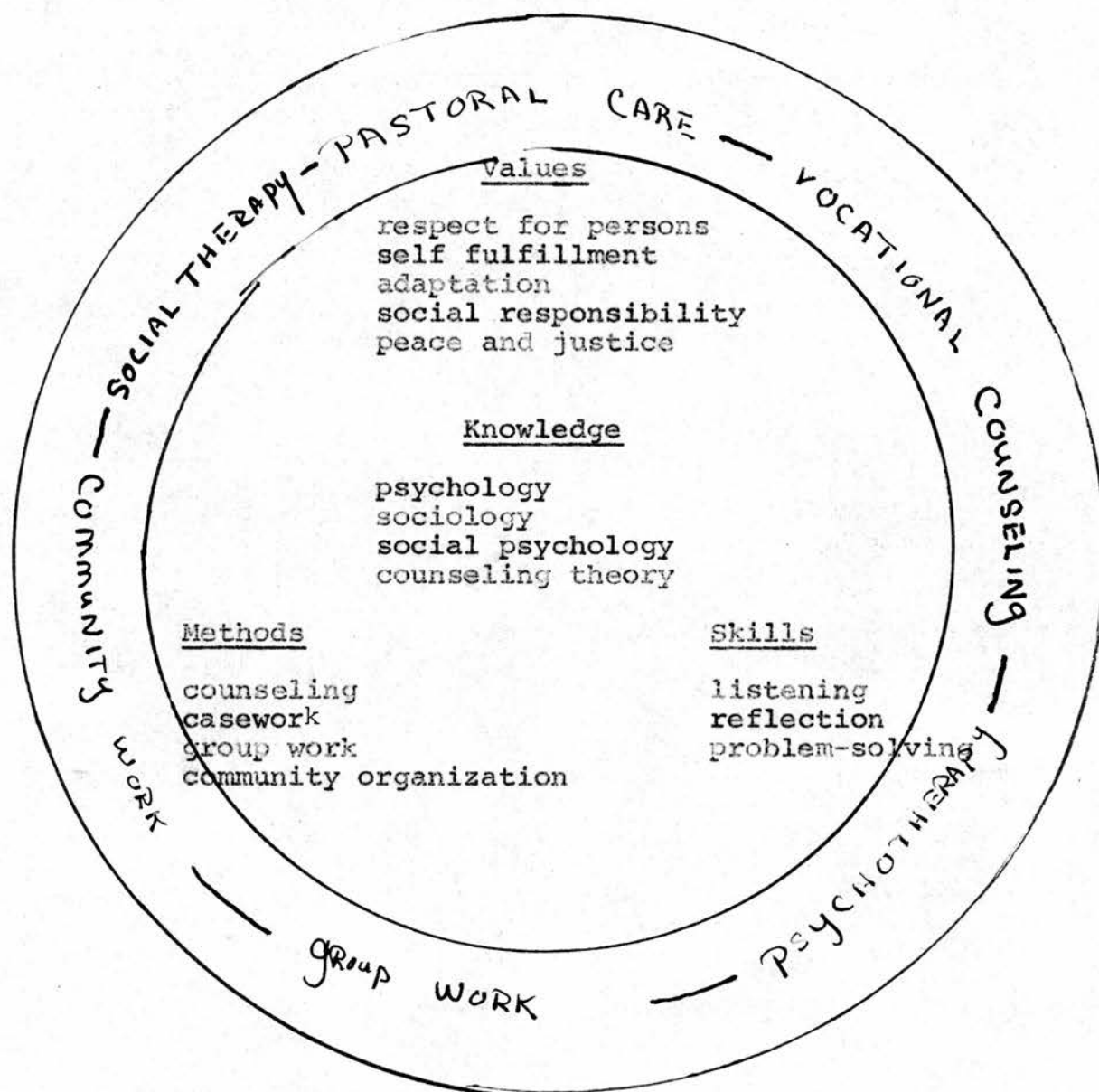
knowledge, and techniques. In all established professions, a considerable amount of agreement exists regarding these basic elements which are taught in the schools and applied in practice.<sup>7</sup>

Pastoral care shares points of continuity with psychiatry, counseling, guidance, social work, group work and community work. One can speak, in metaphor, of the existence of a common pool of values, principles, methods and skills from which each helping discipline borrows to accomplish its task. These common tools are not owned by any single professional service. No profession has a monopoly on the skills and techniques of social intervention. Some professions do use specialized techniques that are not appropriate to other forms of help. Psychiatrists make use of dream interpretation to help resolve a problem situation. Educational psychologists make use of specialized tests and examinations. Social workers have available to them certain financial resources. But beneath the surface of these specialized practices lies a common core of values, knowledge, methods and skills available to all practitioners of help and care.

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<sup>7</sup>Harriet M. Bartlett, The Common Base of Social Work Practice (New York, National Association of Social Work Inc., 1970), pp. 81-82.

Diagram 1



The Common Pool

For example, Abraham Maslow write, "Psychotherapy is not at its base a unique relationship for some of its fundamental qualities are found in all 'good' human

relationships."<sup>8</sup> Carl Rogers writes in On Becoming a Person,

In these moments (of counseling) there is, to borrow Buber's phrase, a real I-Thou relationship, a timeless living in the experience which is between the client and me. It is at the opposite pole from seeing the client, or myself as an object. It is the height of personal subjectivity.<sup>9</sup>

Paul Halmos argues that the literature describing secular forms of counseling is filled with "inspired" terminology which cannot be reduced to the scientific or the secular.<sup>10</sup> The point is that none of the helping disciplines can avoid borrowing from a common pool of values, knowledge, and skills in their respective ministries.

#### Models of Pastoral Care in Church History

The nature, purpose, and function of pastoral care has been conceived and articulated in many different ways throughout the history of the Christian Church. In Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective, Clebsch and Jaekle subdivide the history of pastoral care into eight epochs; each epoch characterized by one of four major pastoral functions: healing, sustaining, nurturing, and reconciling.<sup>11</sup> Charles Kemp in Physicians of the Soul

<sup>8</sup>Abraham Maslow, Motivation and Personality (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1954), p. 314.

<sup>9</sup>Carl R. Rogers, On Becoming A Person (London, Constable and Company Ltd., 1961), p. 202.

<sup>10</sup>Paul Halmos, The Faith of the Counsellors (London, Constable and Company Limited, 1965), p. 6.

<sup>11</sup>William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), pp. 32-66.

and John T. McNeill in A History of the Cure of Souls have likewise traced the broad contours of pastoral ministry throughout history.<sup>12</sup> This history has been rich, diverse, and multi-faceted. Clebsch and Jaekle begin their study with the following statement:

The Christian ministry of the cure of souls, or pastoral care, has been exercised on innumerable occasions and in every conceivable human circumstance, as it has aimed to relieve a plethora of perplexities besetting persons of every class and condition and mentality. Pastors rude and barely plucked from paganism, pastors sophisticated in the theory and practice of their professions, and pastors at every stage of adeptness between these extremes, have sought and wrought to help troubled people overcome their troubles.<sup>13</sup>

To illustrate some of the major styles of pastoral care within church history by means of "models" is to risk the criticism of over-simplification. But a model is an important organizing tool for interpreting patterns of human behavior.<sup>14</sup> It is the purposeful simplification of experience in order to clarify and bring into large focus the nature of the interaction. By looking closely at four models of pastoral ministry there is the possibility of discovering areas of weakness, and thereby the opportunity to develop a more comprehensive and integrated approach to pastoral care.

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<sup>12</sup>See Charles F. Kemp, Physicians of the Soul: A History of Pastoral Counseling (New York, The MacMillan Company, 1947), and John T. McNeill, A History of the Cure of Souls (New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1951).

<sup>13</sup>Clebsch and Jaekle, op. cit., p. 1.

<sup>14</sup>For an excellent discussion about the nature and function of models see Ian G. Barbour, Myths, Models, and Paradigms (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1976), pp. 6-8.



The practice of pastoral care by the Roman Catholic Church during Medieval Christendom is often called the confessional model of ministry. At the Council of Liège in the 8th century, the Roman Church decreed that confessions were compulsory for all members at least once a year. The confession was the verbal disclosure of one's sins, an outpouring of the inner soul, to a priest. This priest had the power and authority to prescribe many forms of penance and then to grant absolution. Parish priests were guided in their actions by Penitentials or handbooks which listed the penalties appropriate to the sins committed. Some sins called for the recitation of penitential psalms, others for fasting, sexual abstinence, and even flagellation. At the appropriate time the priest granted absolution in his role as God's mediator of sacramental grace. Charles Kemp writes,

The penitentials offer to the sinner the means of rehabilitation. He is given guidance to the way of recovering harmonious relations with the Church, society, and God. Freed in the process of penance from social censure, he recovers the lost personal values of which his offenses have deprived him. He can once more function as a normal person.<sup>15</sup>

The confessional model focused on the individual, *per se*; it had no concern for the conditions and dynamics of the society at large. Pastoral care was by nature and function the cure of the individual soul.

The Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century,

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<sup>15</sup>Kemp, op. cit., p. 30

while critical of the medieval system of penance and the use of Penitentials, did not deny the importance of confession. Both Martin Luther and John Calvin affirmed the value of confessions between individual members of the congregation and were fond of quoting from the Book of James 5:16, where it is written, "Therefore confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed." But with the oncoming of the Reformation the focus of pastoral care began to shift to the church discipline model.

John Calvin, in particular, viewed church discipline as an expression of pastoral care. He argued that discipline was a way to preserve the bonds of Christian fellowship and to ensure that the Word of God would be truly heard and the sacraments duly received. Calvin wrote in The Institutes of the Christian Religion,

But as some have such a hatred of discipline as to abhor the very name, they should attend to the following consideration. That as no society, and even no house, though containing only a small family, can be preserved in a proper state without discipline, this is far more necessary in the Church, the state of which ought to be the most orderly of all. As the saving doctrine of Christ is the soul of the Church, so discipline forms the ligaments which connect the members together, and keep each in its proper place.<sup>16</sup>

How was church discipline to be practiced? Discipline was imposed through verbal admonition, advice-giving, and public rebuke. A large part of Calvin's pastoral

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<sup>16</sup> John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans. by Ford Lewis Battles, IV (London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1910), p. 1230.

ministry was carried out by means of letters. Calvin wrote numerous letters of advice, consolation, and rebuke to people of prominence throughout Europe. John T. McNeill writes, "The element of personal guidance or 'direction' abounds in Calvin's correspondence, as doubtless every reader of it has observed."<sup>17</sup> Discipline was imposed in a social context through the public tribunal called the Consistory. The purpose of the Consistory was to restore right-relations and obedience to the law in the public domain of community life.

While the practice of church discipline extended the purview of pastoral care from the private domain (as was characteristic of the confessional model) into the public, the focus was still upon the individual, *per se*, as the primary locus of concern. When problems arose, they were usually considered the result of an individual's disobedience to the established norms and expectations of the community. Little attention was given to the social dimension of problem situations or the social variables which impinge upon human behavior from a sociological perspective. If change was necessary it was the individual who was expected to conform to the community's ways, not the community in need of transformation for the sake of an individual. Despite a public interest that was reflected in the work of the Consistory, pastoral care remained fixated upon the

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<sup>17</sup>McNeill, *op. cit.*, p. 201.

transformation of individuals.

The counseling model of pastoral care was of more recent origin. In 1926 Anton Boisen, then chaplain of Worcester State Hospital in Massachusetts, initiated the first clinical training program for theological students within the setting of a hospital ward. A similar training program began at the Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston under the leadership of Dr. Richard C. Cabot and Rev. Russell L. Dicks. These projects were eventually coordinated by the Council for Clinical Training and the Institute of Pastoral Care. In Great Britain pioneer work was done by Dr. Leslie Weatherhead at City Temple in London and Dr. Frank Lake, whose work contributed to the formation of the Association for Clinical Theological Training and Pastoral Care in Nottingham. These programs gave theological students the opportunity to be trained and supervised in a hospital setting and encouraged them to record their experiences in verbatim reports. Most important, it challenged the students to implement many of the skills and techniques of counseling in their practice of pastoral ministry.

One of the key texts for understanding the counseling model was Seward Hiltner's Pastoral Counseling.<sup>18</sup> Hiltner was influenced by the writings of Dr. Carl Rogers and, in particular, Roger's textbook Counseling and

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<sup>18</sup>See Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York, Abington-Cokesbury Press, 1959).

Psychotherapy.<sup>19</sup> Hiltner began by defining counseling in these words,

Broadly speaking, the special aim of pastoral counseling may be stated as the attempt by a pastor to help people help themselves through the process of gaining understanding of their inner conflicts.<sup>20</sup>

The counseling model is much like the early confessional model in that it focuses on the personal dimensions of the human personality. In a way that is reminiscent of the medieval confessions, attention is directed to the intimate feelings and emotions of the individual. The counseling process unfolds with the discovery of new and unrecognized feelings and is successful when the client is able to gain insight into and understanding of the emotions which are being expressed. The counseling model shows little interest in the social matrix of problem situations but rather tends to treat the human personality as if it were self-sufficient unto itself. Here again, is another model which isolates the individual as the primary unit of concern.

#### The Search for a New Model of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is an expression of Christian ministry. As such, it must assume responsibility for a wide range of problems that develop in the midst of community life. Pastoral care is a response to God's mission in the world

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<sup>19</sup>See Carl Rogers, Counseling and Psychotherapy (Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1942).

<sup>20</sup>Hiltner, op. cit., p. 19.



"to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10). The Church's mission is to be an instrument of God's plan. Its task is to help remove the obstacles which stand in the way of human fulfillment at a personal, interpersonal, and societal level of existence. Therefore, a model of pastoral ministry that is adequate to its task must be (1) comprehensive in scope, (2) flexible in application, and (3) concerned with personal growth and social change.

We have looked briefly at several models of pastoral care. Each model has played an important function in shaping the practice of pastoral ministry at different periods of history. Each model, however, has failed in some way to be adequate as a full expression of the goals of Christian ministry. The major weakness has been a failure to articulate the conceptual links between the individual and society. The literature in the field of pastoral care has tended to overemphasize the autonomy and self-sufficiency of the individual in neglect of the social variables which shape and limit human behavior. Human problems have been described and analyzed without reference to a social environment. Each model has portrayed a fundamental misperception about individual freedom of action vis-à-vis society at large. John Powell discusses this problem in his book Why Am I Afraid to Love? He writes,

The rather common prejudice is that we are personally the masters of our fates and the

captains of our souls, the truth of the matter is that we are very largely shaped by others, who, in an almost frightening way, hold our destiny in their hands. We are, each of us, the product of those who have loved us...or refused to love us.<sup>21</sup>

Pastoral care needs a new model of interaction which describes pastoral ministry in a social context. This new direction has already been taken by Howard Clinebell, Jr.<sup>22</sup> In Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling Clinebell argues that the older counseling model (as represented in textbooks by Seward Hiltner and Carl Rogers) is inadequate to the needs and concerns of pastoral ministry. Clinebell acknowledges the important contribution which the counseling model has made to a new understanding of ministry but he points out the limitation of any approach which focuses exclusively on "feelings" and "attitudes" with insight as the central goal. He writes,

It is the purpose of this book to offer a revised model for pastoral counseling based not on insight-oriented, uncovering psychotherapy, but on relational, supportive, ego-adaptive, reality-oriented approaches to therapy. I call this model 'relationship-centered counseling.'<sup>23</sup>

Clinebell believes that the majority of problems encountered in pastoral ministry are relationship-centered

<sup>21</sup>John Powell, Why Am I Afraid to Love? (Niles, Argus Communications, Co., 1972), p. 29.

<sup>22</sup>See Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1966), and also Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Personal Growth and Social Change: A Guide for Ministers and Laymen as Change Agents (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1969).

<sup>23</sup>Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, op. cit., p. 23.

and require an action-oriented approach.<sup>24</sup> His model moves pastoral care away from its exclusive focus upon the individual, per se, in the direction of the ever-widening concentric circles of social relationship in which all human life is lived. The individual is not treated as an autonomous unit but in relationship to other people in the immediate community. He writes,

The primary focus of the revised model is on the between of conflicting relationships rather than the within of intra-psychic problems. The disturbed relationship, per se, becomes the patient.<sup>25</sup>

A new model of pastoral care is needed which presents a more balanced focus upon the individual's relationship to society. First, the model must be comprehensive. It must locate persons in the context of their immediate social environment. The model must sketch in broad outline the concentric circles of social relationships which structure human behavior. It must help people to understand the dynamic and reciprocal interplay which exists between personality and major social systems as the family, the peer group, and other neighborhood networks. A comprehensive model would integrate the insights of psychology, social psychology, and sociology into a theology of pastoral care.

Second, the model must be flexible in application, able to be directed to many arenas of social concern. Pastoral care cannot rely on just one method; particularly,

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid., pp. 32-33.

<sup>25</sup>Ibid., pp 36.

a method limited to work with individuals alone. The locus of concern may be far broader than the individual, per se. The storm center of a problem situation may be found at the center of a family's life as a whole or in the midst of other social systems in society. Pastoral care must be flexible in approach if it is to be an expression of the demands and goals of Christian ministry.

Third, a new model of care must be change-centered. It must not perpetuate a false dichotomy between ministry for personal conversion and ministry for social change. Personal renewal and the renewal of society are two interrelated dimensions of one comprehensive approach to pastoral ministry. The "personal" and the "societal" domains must not be discussed as an either-or choice when formulating the priorities of intervention. Rather, pastoral care must be directed toward "change" and "renewal" at many levels of social interaction: the personal, the interpersonal, and the broadest parameters of the communal. Seifert and Clinebell seek to avoid this dichotomy in their recent book Personal Growth and Social Change: A Guide for Ministers and Laymen as Change Agents. The authors make a distinction between the concept of growth, a focusing principle for much of recent pastoral literature, and the more generic concept of social change. They write,

Growth is a development concept, usually applied to individual persons and their relationship, involving the unfolding of inherent potentialities. The more generic concept of change can be applied

either to individual personalities, or to small face-to-face groups like the family, to larger social institutions or organizations, to local, national, or international communities, or to the character of culture as a whole. In all these instances, we are aiming at the full release of the possibilities in the situation.<sup>26</sup>

It is helpful, when discussing a comprehensive, flexible, and change-oriented approach to pastoral care, to take a good look at the theory and practice of social work as it has developed in Great Britain and America. Many problems encountered in pastoral ministry are identical to problems experienced in social work practice. Both helping disciplines are concerned with trying to facilitate personal growth and social change within the context of community life. Practitioners in both field express a two-fold concern for the individual, per se, and for the environment of society at large. A new model of pastoral care that is social in scope can only be enriched by looking at the way social work has been practiced throughout its history and at the issues and problems with which social workers have wrestled. Social workers, perhaps more than any other practitioners, have labored to develop a broad understanding of their own ministries in a social context. Here is an important arena in which to begin the dialogue between theology and the social sciences in search for a more comprehensive model of pastoral care.

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<sup>26</sup>Seifert and Clinebell, op. cit., pl 10.



## Chapter 2

### A Look at Social Work Theory and Practice

Throughout history, societies have established instrumentalities to help persons in times of crisis. Methods of social intervention have been developed by trial and error. Only in the past century, however, have attempts been made to clarify and systematize the skills involved in methods of social intervention. An important part of this theory-building process has occurred in the field of social work practice.

Broadly speaking, the practice of social work has reflected society's concern to help individuals with problems in social functioning and to improve the general conditions of society at large. Social work in Great Britain and America has developed as a two-fold concern for the individual, per se, and for the overall needs of society. Nathan E. Cohen writes in his book Social Work in the American Tradition,

The two-pronged approach includes concern, on the one hand, for the adjustment and development of the individual toward more satisfying human relations and, on the other, for improving the social institutions within which the individual functions. It seeks through its work with individuals, groups, and the community to help people find within themselves the resources for solving both the problems that affect them alone and those that affect people in general. Thus it is concerned not only with the individual and social institutions within which he functions but also with the relationship between these two factors.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Nathan E. Cohen, Social Work in the American Tradition (New York, The Dryden Press, 1958), p. 8.

In response to this two-fold concern there has evolved in social work practice three general methods of intervention: casework, group work, and community work. These methods did not appear over-night, nor was their essential unity of purpose recognized immediately. Each method developed in a different setting under the aegis of different professional disciplines and it wasn't until the Second World War that attempts were made to integrate the three approaches into one model. In fact, efforts to formulate a comprehensive theory of practice met strong resistance. Nevertheless, the final integration of casework, group work, and community work into a three-fold model did occur; and it did so, in large part, because of social workers' on-going concern for the individual and the social context of human life.

#### The History of Social Casework

The origins of social casework go back to the earliest activities of the Charity Organization Societies in Great Britain and America. These societies developed at the turn of the century in the effort to coordinate some of the diverse and competitive alms-giving practices of private charities and philanthropic organizations.<sup>2</sup> The C.O.S. began to introduce some general guidelines for

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<sup>2</sup>For an excellent and detailed discussion of the history of social work practice as casework, group work and community work see Kathleen Woodroffe, From Charity to Social Work (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), and Howard Goldstein, Social Work Practice: A Unitary Approach (Columbia, University of South Carolina Press, 1974), pp. 20-55. The following discussion is based on the facts and insights of these two major studies.

the distribution of alms and some criteria for distinguishing the deserving from the undeserving poor. The "friendly visitor" from the C.O.S. made personal house calls to their respective clients, collected information about their living conditions and family relationships, and then submitted their findings to a general committee for its judgment and evaluation. The intent was to make the distribution process more equitable as well as to make intervention, itself, more effective. Gradually, there developed some skills and procedures that came to be known as casework. But at the time, no systematic theory was available to help C.O.S. workers reflect upon what they were doing in practice.

In 1917 Mary Richmond wrote a book entitled Social Diagnosis.<sup>3</sup> It was a study of casework methods and skills which was to become a classic in the field. As director of the Charity Organization Department of the Russell Sage Foundation as well as teacher at the New York School of Philanthropy (later the Columbia School of Social Work), Miss Richmond was in a strategic position to correlate and synthesize the diverse practices of the C.O.S. into one comprehensive theory of casework. Casework, argued Richmond involved three steps: study, diagnosis, and treatment. First, the case needed to be studied and her textbook provided guidelines for assessing and evaluating the facts involved in a problem situation.<sup>4</sup> Second, there

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<sup>3</sup>See Mary E. Richmond, Social Diagnosis (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1917).

<sup>4</sup>Richmond, op. cit., p. 357.

was a need for diagnosis in order to produce an exact definition of the problem. Social diagnosis was the central task of the whole casework process for it was assumed that if an exact definition could be formulated, then the treatment steps would be obvious as the logical sequence. Third, treatment was conceived as a process of bringing social resources to bear upon the individual problem situation. "What is social casework?" Miss Richmond asked in the title of one of her books. Her answer was that it was a "series of processes which develop personality through adjustments consciously affected, individual by individual, between men and their social environment."<sup>5</sup>

Mary Richmond was a pioneer in the field of social work theory. Kathleen Woodroffe summarizes her contribution in the following words:

Here, then, are the three main concepts which Mary Richmond bequeathed to social casework -- the concept of a systematic method by which a social diagnosis could be made to serve as a basis for treatment, the concept that a knowledge of human behavior was necessary for a better understanding of the individual, his family life and the personal and social relationships by which he lived, and the concept of the process of social work as a democratic process in which the caseworker and client could co-operate to their mutual advantage.<sup>6</sup>

The Post-War years of the 1920's were times of fundamental change in the nature and practice of social casework. Social workers were no longer employed merely

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<sup>5</sup>Mary Richmond, What is Social Case Work? (New York, Russell Sage Foundation, 1922), pp. 98-99.

<sup>6</sup>Woodroffe, op. cit., pp. 114-115.



by charity organization societies but were now practicing in child guidance clinics, psychiatric hospitals, schools, and on the wards of general hospitals. These settings demanded a more sophisticated approach to intervention than was found in the earlier days of alms-giving. Social workers were active in the home services divisions of the American Red Cross during the War and here they had encountered patients with severe psychiatric problems. In 1918 Smith College began a special training program for professional psychiatric social workers. Freudian theories and techniques began to have a major influence on the practice of social casework, and event which Woodroffe describes as the "psychiatric deluge" of the Post-War years.<sup>7</sup> The knowledge base of casework began to shift from a sociological orientation, a characteristic of Richmond's approach, to a psychoanalytic basis. The influence of Freudian theories had two major effects upon casework theory; (1) it focused attention on the inner dimensions of the human personality and the role of the sub-conscious in human growth and development, and (2) it established casework as a one-to-one, person-to-person intervention process in distinction from group work and other forms of group activities.

The current practice of social casework is divided into three schools of thought. The "diagnostic school"

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 119.



is a name given to work that is being done at the New York School of Social Work and at Smith College in Massachusetts. The approach stresses the importance of diagnosis and the need for detailed diagnosis before any treatment program is prescribed. These views are reflected in the writings of Gordon Hamilton, Theory, and Practice of Social Casework and Florence Hollis, Casework: A Psychosocial Therapy.<sup>8</sup> A second school of thought, the "functional school," has been developed at the University of Pennsylvania under the leadership of Jesse Taft and Virginia Robinson.<sup>9</sup> Influenced by Rankian psychology, existentialism, and Rogerian client-centered therapy, this approach emphasizes the importance of "will" and "will-power" in human growth and development. The casework process is viewed as one of helping each individual release the inner potential for self-fulfillment latent within every personality. Diagnosis is only attempted within the context of treatment; and even then, is not stressed as an important factor of therapy. Finally, there is a third school of social work practice that has formed around the work of Helen H.

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<sup>8</sup>See Gordon Hamilton, The Theory and Practice of Social Casework (New York, Columbia University Press, 1947), and Florence Hollis, Casework: A Psychosocial Therapy (New York, Random House, 1964).

<sup>9</sup>See Virginia P. Robinson, ed., Jessie Taft, Therapist and Social Work Educator (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962); Virginia P. Robinson, The Dynamics of Supervision under Functional Controls (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950); Ruth E. Smalley, Theory for Social Work Practice (New York, Columbia University Press, 1967); and Kenneth L. M. Pray, Social Work in a Revolutionary Age (Philadelphia, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1949).

Perlman at the University of Chicago. The approach is called "problem-solving" and more will be said about Helen Perlman in the course of this thesis. Her textbook, Social Casework: A Problem-solving Process integrates insights from Freudian ego-psychology with sociological role theory.<sup>10</sup> The problem-solving method has also been influenced by John Dewey's theories of reflective thought.<sup>11</sup> All three schools of social casework are American based. In Great Britian, no identifiable schools of thought have developed as yet, although Noel Timms' Social Casework: Principles and Practice has been a basic textbook in schools of social work for the past decade.<sup>12</sup> Timms combines insights from the functional school with his own particular interest in sociology and the social sciences.

#### Group Work as a Social Work Method

Group work, initially, developed outside the context of professional social work circles. The National Conference of Social Work, during its first thirty years, regarded group work and community work as merely adjunctive activities to the primary task of casework. It wasn't until 1935 that the National Conference created a special department with responsibility for group work

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<sup>10</sup>See Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-Solving Process (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957).

<sup>11</sup>See Chapter 3 for further discussion of John Dewey's contribution to problem-solving and for a more detailed reference.

<sup>12</sup>Noel Timms, Social Casework: Principles and Practice (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

activities, and 1955 when the Conference officially recognized group work as a discipline within the profession.

The origins of social group work go back to the early activities of such organizations as the Young Men's Christian Association, the Boy's Brigade, and settlement houses in the later part of the 19th century. It was a settlement worker, in fact, who was to become one of the first group therapists. His name was Rev. Samuel A. Barnett and he was the founder of Toynbee Hall in the East End of London. There were other settlements in Great Britain and America: Oxford House in Bethnal Green, Mansfield House in Canning Town, Henry Street Settlement in New York City, and Hull House in Chicago, all sharing the common purpose of providing group activities for residents in deprived neighborhoods. These settlement houses were the centers for recreation, discussion, adult-education, and a host of other group-related functions. Canon Barnett, was just one of a number of individuals who saw the need of small groups as a context for helping persons with problems.

The settlement workers were also concerned with conditions in society at large. Many workers joined the Progressive Movement in America and campaigned for a decent living wage, an eight hour day, minimum health and safety standards in industry and other social services. Trade unions often were first formed in rooms provided by the settlement houses. Hull House in Chicago became

the center of activities directed against corrupt government practices in that city.

The first course in group work was given at Western Reserve University in Cleveland under the leadership of Grace Longwell Coyle. Miss Coyle's work and thought was as formative for social group work practice as Mary Richmond's contribution to social Casework. In 1930 other group work programs were established at the University of Pittsburgh and the New York School of Social Work and in 1936 the American Association for the Study of Group Work was founded. Then, in 1946 an historical meeting took place in the Kleinhaus Music Hall of Buffalo, New York during the National Conference of Social Workers. Members of both the American Association of Group Workers and the National Association of Social Workers gathered in this building to hear a key-note address delivered by Grace Coyle. The speech was entitled "On Becoming Professional," and Miss Coyle concluded with these words:

Casework, group work, and community organization have this common factor, that they are all based on understanding human relations. While the specific relations used in each are different, the underlying philosophy and approach are the same: a respect for personality and a belief in democracy. This we share with caseworkers and expert community organization people. It is for this reason that I believe group work as a method falls within the larger scope of social work as a method as defined above.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Grace L. Coyle, "On Becoming Professional," in Harleigh B. Trecker, ed., Group Work: Foundations and Frontiers (New York, Whiteside, Inc. and William Morrow and Company, 1955), p. 340.



The professional merger between group workers and caseworkers was accomplished in 1955 when the A.A.G.W. officially joined the N.A.S.W.

In Great Britain, there has been very little written material on group work theory in the field of social work practice. The primary locus of group work activity has continued to be in the settlement house, now called a community center, and also in local churches and trade union halls. Little attention has yet been given to the role of trade unions in the history of group work activities, but it is quite possible that in Great Britain, at least, the trade union halls have been major centers of group work practice. Likewise, the Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., the Boy Scouts, Girl Guides and other youth associations have contributed to this practice. Yet, the fact remains that Great Britain has contributed little to the theory of group work. Writes Kathleen Woodroffe,

Whatever the cause for her reticence, the English exponent of group work and community organization even more than the caseworker, has been content to leave most of the talking to her more loquacious cousin."<sup>14</sup>

### The Practice of Community Work

Community work is the most difficult of the three social work methods to describe.<sup>15</sup> The task is complicated

<sup>14</sup>Woodroffe, op. cit., p. 185.

<sup>15</sup>The term "community organization" is commonly used in the United States to describe the third method of social work practice. We prefer the term "community work" as the generic word and use "community organization" to describe one type of community work activity.



by the comprehensive nature of the term "community" and by the variety and complexity of community intervention that involves community development, organization, planning, social welfare administration and the social services. Broadly speaking, community work refers to a series of actions, activities, or interventions directed to problems which influence life in a neighborhood at large.

The history of community work, like the story of group work, dates back to the reform tradition of the early Settlement Movement. Pioneer programs in community work include Octavia Hill's campaigns for better housing in London at the turn of the century; Jane Addams's social action programs at Hull House in Chicago; and Lillian Wald's efforts to introduce a community nursing service in New York City; one of the first models in comprehensive community care. Attention must also be called to Charles Booth's books Life and Labour of the People of London Vol. I (1892) and Vol. VII (1903).<sup>16</sup> Booth produced one of the classic studies in social investigation; a study that is still of major significance in the history of community surveys. Booth demonstrated the statistical relationship between the social conditions of poverty, squalor, illness, crime and misery on the one hand and job

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<sup>16</sup>For a detailed discussion of Charles Booth's contributions see Woodroffe, op. cit., pp. 9-12, 14, 21, and 34.

opportunities, on the other. The statistics sharply refuted the arguments of many people within the C.O.S. that poverty was the result of character weakness and moral defect.<sup>17</sup>

Two broad streams of activity have characterized the history of community work in Great Britain and America. The first stream is described under the rubric of community organization. The orientation of this approach has been towards organization and coordination of the existing services in a community to prevent overlapping or duplication of effort. The original intent of the C.O.S. was precisely to coordinate the numerous private agencies already dispensing alms. More recent examples of coordinating bodies have been the neighborhood council or community welfare councils. In 1960 there were over 2,000 Community Chest organizations conducting united fund raising campaigns in America. In Britain the National Council of Social Service and the Rural Community Councils have functioned as broad based community organizations.

The second stream of community work activity has been practiced under the rubric of "social action." This approach has been less consensus oriented and more conflict directed. The aim has not been to coordinate existing service but to demand new services

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 34.

in the community which haven't yet existed. The overall goal has been to change the conditions of society which produce poverty, crime, and exploitation. In both Britain and America this approach has been taken by many tenant associations and claimant's unions that have seen no other solutions to the basic problems of social injustice.

In America community work has been described primarily as a process of community organization. The Lane Reports of 1939 and 1940 to the National Council of Social Work described community work as four different forms of community organization: (1) helping groups of people to recognize and meet common need; (2) a process of education aimed at satisfactory inter-group relations; (3) the coordination and integration of existing groups within the community in the interest of efficiency; and (4) the adjustment of existing resources to meet changing human needs.<sup>18</sup> In Great Britain community work has been conceptualized in a more comprehensive fashion in two reports produced by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation. The first report Community Work and Social Change (1968), describes three "strands" of community work practice as: (1) direct

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<sup>18</sup>See Robert P. Lane, "The Field of Community Organization," in Proceedings of the National Council of Social Work (Buffalo, 1939), pp. 495-511; and "Report of Groups Studying the Community Organization Process" in Proceedings of the 67th National Council of Social Work (Grand Rapids, 1940), p. 459.

work with local people; (2) agency and inter-agency co-ordination; and (3) forecasting and social planning.<sup>19</sup> A second report entitled, Current Issues in Community Work re-conceptualizes the strands to read: (1) community field work, (2) community organization, and (3) community planning.<sup>20</sup> In conclusion it must be said that the British approach has presented a more comprehensive model of community work practice; one that includes both a consensus and a conflict approach to social action.<sup>21</sup>

The tri-fold integration of casework, group work and community work into one comprehensive and generic model of social work practice has now been confirmed by most reports in social work circles. This approach was adopted in a special report entitled, "A Working Definition of Social Work Practice" (1958), and drawn up by the Committee on Social Work Practice of the National Association of Social Workers.<sup>22</sup> The approach is also adopted by the Younghusband Report to the United Nations entitled, "The Nature of Social Work."

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<sup>19</sup>See Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Community Work and Social Change (London, Longmans, Green and Co., Ltd., 1968).

<sup>20</sup>See The Community Work Group, Current Issues in Community Work (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1973).

<sup>21</sup>Chapter 9 discusses community work as a method of pastoral care. Community work is described in detail using the three concepts of community field work, community organization, and community planning.

<sup>22</sup>The report can be found in the appendix of Harriet M. Bartlett's, The Common Base of Social Work Practice (New York, National Association of Social Work, Inc., 1970).



The author, Dame Eileen Younghusband, summarizes as follows:

Many would claim that in spite of the fluid margins characteristic of any growing profession there is now an identifiable and transmissible core of theory and practice in that the processes of social work with individuals (casework), with groups (group work), and with communities (community organization) have now been systematized to an extent which makes the practice of social work possible in varied settings and social and economic circumstances.<sup>23</sup>

### The Contributions of Social Work Theory to an Understanding of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care, as one dimension of Christian ministry, requires a broad-based, comprehensive model of social intervention. The practitioners of pastoral care share with social workers the same two-fold interest for the individual, per se, and the community at large. The problems encountered in pastoral ministry involve families, small groups, large organizations and neighborhoods. Both pastoral care and social work are concerned with a wide range of problems which develop in the context of community life. Many insights developed in social work practice are important for understanding the work of pastoral care. These contributions can be summarized under three categories: (1) the knowledge base, (2) treatment methods, and (3) goals and areas of concern.

First, social work can help to make us more sensitive to the "social" dimensions of pastoral care. Pastoral

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<sup>23</sup>E.L. Younghusband, "The Nature of Social Work," in A.V.S. Lockhead, ed., A Reader in Social Administration (London, Constable and Co. Ltd., 1968), p. 49.



ministry must learn to make use of insights from sociology and the social sciences.<sup>24</sup> Herman Stein's warning to social workers in his article, "The Concept of Social Environment," should be heard by pastoral ministers also. Stein writes,

There is no easy escaping the conclusion that the social sciences are with us and we cannot look to psychiatry as a haven against these winds that are blowing our way. They are blowing just as strongly within psychiatry.<sup>25</sup>

One of the most important contributions social work theory can make to a new understanding of pastoral care is to focus attention on the importance of sociology and the social sciences for intervention theory. Brian J. Heraud writes in Sociology and Social Work,

There is a fresh realization that a sociological approach is a necessary part of the diagnosis of individual behavior and the treatment of individual problems, and that sociology is of relevance to the understanding of the individual act.<sup>26</sup>

Social knowledge is essential for an understanding of human behavior within the context of community life. Herman Stein calls attention to the fact that every problem situation has a social environment, the dynamics

<sup>24</sup>Noel Timms demonstrates the importance of a sociological approach for understanding problems encountered in the community in his book, A Sociological Approach to Social Problems (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967).

<sup>25</sup>Herman D. Stein, "The Concept of Social Environment in Social Work Practice," in Howard J. Parad and Roger R. Miller, eds., Ego-Oriented Casework: Problems and Perspectives (New York, Family Service Association of America, 1963), p. 65.

<sup>26</sup>Brian J. Heraud, Sociology and Social Work: Perspectives and Problems (Oxford, Pergamon Press, 1970), pp. 6-7.

of which contribute to the perpetuation of the problem. Stein describes the concept of social environment in this way:

One may conceive of the social environment as a series of concentric circles of systems of influence, all interacting. At the outer extreme is society as a whole -- in our case the United States -- particularly its effects on the patterns of human behavior. We then look at regional variations and those of urban, small town, and rural life. As we move closer toward the center of the individual's life experience we reach the neighborhood, or community level with its specific conditioning patterns. The influence of peer groups, of recreational and institutional settings in which the individual may be located, are closely involved, and at the very center of the social environment of the individual, we find his family, the one in which he grew up and the one in which he became a parent.<sup>27</sup>

If careful consideration is not given to the social dimensions of human behavior, pastoral care will fail to reach out to the "whole person"; a basic goal of Christian ministry. Understanding the whole person means seeing human life in context. Models of pastoral care which focus too narrowly on the individual, per se, in neglect of the social environment in which life is lived, cannot provide a point of departure for ministering to the total needs of the whole person. Social work theory makes an important contribution to pastoral care by focusing attention on the social dynamics of problem situations.

Second, traditional models of pastoral ministry have tended to treat the individual as the primary unit

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<sup>27</sup>Stein, op. cit., p. 70.

of attention. No matter how broad the dimensions of the problem, the self-enclosed individual has continued to be the target of intervention. Social work theory helps to broaden our understanding of the possibilities available for a comprehensive and flexible approach to ministry. For example, the individual may be best served when larger social units which influence the problem situation are treated as part of the difficulty. Many problems that are experienced by the individual are resolved in a larger social context when attention is directed to the family as a whole or to other significant social systems. A flexible approach to social intervention does not rule out the individual as the ultimate beneficiary of care; instead, it maximizes the possibility that key social variables involved in the problem will also be taken into consideration.

Social work's three-fold model of intervention; casework, group work, and community work gives to pastoral care a flexibility that is needed when doing community-based ministry, for the kinds of problems encountered affect the lives of individuals, groups, and neighborhoods at large. To the extent that models of pastoral care are restricted to a one-to-one, person-to-person approach of intervention, pastoral ministry remains less than comprehensive in scope. Social work theory helps to sensitize us to the need for flexibility and variety of strategies in order to achieve the broad goals of Christian ministry.

Third, social work theory helps to clarify and

reaffirm the goals and objectives of pastoral care. One of the central goals in social work practice is contained in the concept of "community care." On February 5, 1963 the late President John F. Kennedy delivered an address to the Congress of the United States in which he called for a new approach to mental health and mental illness through programs of comprehensive community care.<sup>28</sup> Kennedy's address reaffirmed one of the primary goals of social work practice: the community as a whole.

The concept of community care is recognized as an important priority by many contemporary social service agencies.<sup>29</sup> "Community care" writes Jean Heywood, "involves a whole re-thinking about community responsibility."<sup>30</sup> It assumes that the community at large is responsible for the health and well-being of every

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<sup>28</sup>John F. Kennedy, "Message from the President of the United States Relative to Mental Illness and Mental Retardation," 88th Congress, First Session, House of Representatives Document, No. 58., (February 1963).

<sup>29</sup>There has been a significant shift of priorities within the mental health field from an exclusive reliance on institutional centers, such as psychiatric hospitals, to community-based forms of support, after care, and preventive medicine. This shift can be observed in a number of important government publications in Great Britain as for example Seebohm: Report on the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Services (London, H.M.S.O., 1968), and the Royal Commission on Medical Education (London, H.M.S.O., 1968). In the name of community care, many psychiatrists, social workers, health visitors, community workers, and nurses have joined together to create informal working-teams to serve major catchment areas within the community.

<sup>30</sup>Jean Heywood, "Social Work: The Catalyst in the Community," Contact, No. 24 (September, 1968), p. 6.



individual member and that a responsible community is one that exercises a caretaker role. Writes J. Obert Kempson,

A caretaker community is a caring community interrelated through pulsating relationships which nourish, sustain, and stimulate constructive change, open new vistas, develop perspectives of its own structures, transcend the trivial, actualize potential and find meaning in life experiences. A caring community provokes personal self extension which in turn should create community extension.<sup>31</sup>

Social work's focus upon the community at large and the recognition of the need for community care can help pastoral care to rediscover the dimensions of its own roots, for Christian ministry is rooted in the community of the Church and exists only in mission to the community of the world. Pastoral care that is the full expression of the social demands of the Gospel is community care at its very best. Thus, pastoral care can find in social work theory clarification and reaffirmation of many essential goals and priorities.

The above contributions provide a starting point for a new model of pastoral ministry. Major insights from social work theory are available to the practitioners of pastoral care in the areas of knowledge, intervention, and the definition of goals. But the single most important contribution is social work's focus upon problem-solving. Social work practice at every level, begins with the question, "What is the problem at hand?"

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<sup>31</sup>J. Obert Kempson, "Beyond Cliche Concepts," Pastoral Psychology, Volume XX, No. 24 (May, 1959), p. 8.



The problem is the storm center of concern; it is the symptom that something is wrong somewhere within the context of social interaction. The aim and goal of social work is to define and resolve this problem.

Problem-solving is the common denominator which unites all three methods of practice: casework, group work and community work. Social workers use the basic steps of the problem-solving process in their work with individuals, small groups, organizations, and when intervening in the community at large. Problem-solving skills can be adapted to issues of human need in macroscopic and microscopic dimension. These basic steps are generic to every method and strategy of social intervention in the field of practice.

Thus, the problem-solving model offers pastoral care the possibility for a new, comprehensive and flexible approach to the tasks of pastoral ministry. The problem-solving model is comprehensive because it calls attention to both the personal and social dimensions of human behavior; it is flexible because it can be adapted to meet the needs of a variety of problem situations; and it integrates the two-fold concern for individual growth and fulfillment, and change within society as a whole. Problem-solving, in other words, is one way of doing pastoral ministry in a social context in response to the demands of the Christian Gospel.

This short overview has been undertaken to point

out areas for dialogue between social work and pastoral care. It has been argued that pastoral ministry can benefit from an understanding of the knowledge base, the methods of intervention and the goals of social work practice. The argument is made that pastoral care can be more comprehensive and flexible if it adopts the three-fold model of social work intervention: casework, group work and community work. Finally, problem-solving is discussed as the common denominator which unites the different methods of social work practice, and thus, the basis for a new, comprehensive model of pastoral care. We now take an in-depth look at the nature and function of the problem-solving process in the context of pastoral ministry.

## Chapter 3

The Problem-Solving Method of Pastoral Care

Problem-solving is a fundamental dimension of human behavior. The ability to problem-solve is one of the skills which makes human beings distinctively human. Men and women are able to choose their own goals and priorities. To be human is to be able to make decisions in a purposeful way. Animals are motivated by blind instinct and habit; they react to pressures of the environment with no ability to formulate alternative courses of action or anticipate the consequences of their decisions. Human beings, however, are goal-directed; able to be pro-active and not just reactive. We are intentional beings.

Problem-solving is the ability to be intentional about the problems one encounters in everyday life. One is intentional when one shapes, molds, and alters the environment in accordance with clearly defined goals and objectives. The word "intentional" comes from the Latin stem "intendere" and means "to stretch towards."<sup>1</sup> An intentional action stretches toward the future in transcendence of conditions within the past. John Biersdorf writes in Creating an Intentional Ministry,

Intentionality thus has a future orientation; it means purposefully directing one's life as much as possible rather than simply allowing it to be determined by past and present pressures.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rollo May, Love and Will (New York, W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1969), p. 228.

<sup>2</sup>John Biersdorf, "A New Model of Ministry," in John Biersdorf, ed., Creating and Intentional Ministry (Nashville, Abingdon, 1976), p. 24

Problem-solving, in essence, is simply a way of procedure. The basic steps of problem-solving have no intrinsic value, these steps can be used for good as well as evil. The value of problem-solving is dependent upon the goals towards which it is directed. Pastoral care incorporates the problem-solving model into a framework of clearly established goals developed on the basis of a theological understanding of God's mission in the world. It is within this goal-directed context that the problem-solving process is integrated into the practice of pastoral care.

#### Origins of the Problem-Solving Model

The origins of the problem-solving model are rooted in the development of modern science and in the history of American pragmatism. Elements of the problem-solving process are as old as the history of human thought, yet systematic formulation of the basic steps to problem-solving is of recent development. One of the earliest formulations of the process is found in education theory. In 1910, John Dewey wrote a short book entitled How We Think.<sup>3</sup> Dewey's primary concern was to describe the basic components of reflective thought. The components of reflective thought, however, are also the basic steps of problem-solving. He writes,

Thinking begins in what may fairly enough be called a forked-road situation, a situation which is ambiguous, which presents a dilemma, which proposes alternatives....In the suspense of uncertainty, we

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<sup>3</sup>See John Dewey, How We Think (Boston, D.C. Heath and Co., Publishers, 1910).

metaphorically climb a tree; we try to find some standpoint from which we may survey additional facts and, getting a more commanding view of the situation, may decide how the facts stand related to one another.<sup>4</sup>

Reflective thought was, for Dewey, an organized and intentional response to problems encountered in the world. He discerned five basic steps: (1) awareness of a difficulty or problem; (2) the location, definition, and analysis of the problem; (3) the formulation of a solution or alternatives; (4) and elaborated analysis of each alternative; and (5) the development of a plan of action for verification and corroboration.<sup>5</sup> Dewey argued that if decisions were not made on the basis of these five steps, human interaction would be motivated either by blind instinct or the pressures of the environment.

John Dewey's primary focus in How We Think was upon the cognitive functions of the human mind. His concern was not for the emotional or interpersonal dimensions of human interaction. He presented the basic steps of reflective problem-solving as a teaching model, for the purposes of the classroom and not as a method of counseling or social intervention.

It was Helen Harris Perlman, in her text Social Casework: A Problem-solving Process (1957), who incorporated the basic steps of problem-solving into a theory of social intervention. Perlman presented the

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 11.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 72-78.



problem-solving model as a method for social casework practice. Her approach combined the insights of psychoanalytic ego psychology with Dewey's principles of reflective thought. By relating Dewey's concepts to Freudian theory, Perlman was able to demonstrate the usefulness of problem-solving skills when working with emotional or interpersonal difficulties. This mode of operation embodied many of the fundamental values and principles endorsed by John Dewey: the importance of reflective thought, the need for systematic inquiry into problem-situations, and the value of learning by doing. By integrating the basic steps of reflective thought into a theory of social casework, Perlman transformed a teaching model into a counseling method.

Perlman defines casework as a "process used by certain human welfare agencies to help individuals to cope more effectively with their problems in social functioning."<sup>6</sup> Casework begins in the same way as reflective thought, with the problem at hand. Whether the problem is the lack of food, a marital conflict, alcoholism, or unemployment, it is the problem, as presented, which becomes the focus of immediate concern.<sup>7</sup>

The caseworker wants to understand the problem which is most "pressing" for the client. Where does it hurt the most, here and now? What are the social dimensions

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<sup>6</sup>Helen H. Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-solving Process (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 4.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., pp. 27-39.

of the problem? Who are the significant people within the immediate context of the problem situation? These are questions that the caseworker and client work on together as they explore the dimensions of the problem situation.

Problem-solving, according to Perlman, is a process of strengthening the functions of the "ego" -- the client's ability to think, to reflect, to perceive, to adapt, to cope with the master forces within the environment.<sup>8</sup> Whereas for Dewey, problem-solving was a matter of stimulating reflective thought, for Perlman, problem-solving is a process of strengthening ego control. The human ego is like a muscle, it needs to be exercised if it is to be strong. Therefore problem-solving is the conscious and active exercise of these ego functions so as to help people to adapt to the inherent tensions between inner drives (id) and social demands (super ego). It involves not just becoming insightful about one's problem, but also being able to act and resolve the conflicts manifested in the problem situation. A person with a strong ego is able to discriminate, to make choices, to know when to act and when not to act, to delay immediate gratification, to plan ahead, and to be intentional about the overall direction of one's life. Writes Perlman,

The proof of the ego's functioning adequacy is the person's ability to carry out into his living such action as is appropriate both to social reality

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., pp. 14-17.

and to his own consciously chosen goals. Often this step to action feels like a risky business, because it may involve behaving differently -- in some instances, taking bold steps of speech or actions; in others, desisting from impulsive behavior; in some, uprooting habitual living arrangements; in others, upsetting long-established patterns of relationship. Here, again, the casework relationship makes it possible for the client to take these risks, for it offers him the haven to which he can return to share his small triumphs or failures, his satisfactions or frustrations, and, in addition, to prepare to sally forth again. As the person's trial actions succeed, as what he does or how he maintains balance gratifies him or as it evokes more satisfying responses from other persons, his ego gains in its sense of mastery. 'Nothing succeeds like success' was never more true than as it applies to the ego.<sup>9</sup>

The role of the caseworker in social work practice is to help the client to actively exercise ego functions and to formulate with the person, plans for action. The caseworker directs the focus of discussions upon the problem-to-be-worked, using direct questions, probing remarks, even confrontation to encourage the client to assess the facts of the problem; to rehearse proposals for action, and to initiate try-out attempts toward a solution. The caseworker helps the client to weigh alternative courses of action against the destructive consequences of current behavior. People are encouraged to explore new directions in the hopes of finding pathways where constructive change will be possible. Gradually, thought is transformed into action and there is praxis.

Perlman's textbook Social Casework: A Problem-solving Process transforms an educational-classroom model

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., pp. 98-99.

of problem-solving into a counseling model. Within the context of this method, problem-solving can be directed at both the emotional and the interpersonal dimensions of human behavior. Perlman's emphasis on problem-solving, as a casework method, has been especially helpful for those people working with the underprivileged in areas of multiple deprivation. The hard-to-reach, the delinquent, the multiple problem families are more apt to respond to a problem-solving approach than to the more introspective orientation of psychotherapy. Perlman's text demonstrates the wide possibilities for problem-solving as a method of social intervention.

#### The Basic Steps of the Problem-Solving Process

The basic steps of problem-solving are important not only in social work practice but for all helping approaches concerned with social involvement and social change. The problem-solving model is particularly suitable as a method of social intervention because it can be used, in a flexible way, to resolve a broad spectrum of social problems which occur in the context of community life. Problem-solving skills can be used for work with individuals, families, small groups, organizations, or when dealing with the community at large. Once a target of concern is identified and the storm-center located, the basic steps of problem-solving follow in sequential order. These steps are similar whether the problem is intimately personal or part of the social dynamics of a whole neighborhood. Problem-



solving integrates the working methodologies of casework, group work and community work into one comprehensive model of social intervention. The basic steps, as described below, are generic to all three methods of approach.

The problem-solving process is composed of six steps.<sup>10</sup> The first step defines the problem at hand. Defining a problem is to locate the center of concern and to explore the circumstances of the difficulty which has been encountered. What are the concerns that have been presented? Who is involved in the problem situation? What are the major barriers and obstacles blocking the resolution of the difficulty? Is it possible to discern any patterns of behavior or ways of relationship that should be changed? The process of definition is the initial opportunity to look at the problem from different perspectives and then to bring it into manageable focus.

The second step is a process of generating possible solutions to the problem at hand. To brainstorm is to envision the future as one would wish it to be. It is an act of imagination which drives the individual beyond the limits of a particular set of circumstances, suspending for a moment long held assumptions and

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<sup>10</sup>The following outline is based on Dr. Thomas Gordon's Method III problem-solving steps presented in his P.E.T. Workbook. For charts, diagrams and more information see Dr. Thomas Gordon, Parent Effectiveness Training Workbook (Solana Beach, Effectiveness Training Incorporated, 1976), pp. 44-46.



presuppositions, in search for new strategies that would resolve the problem. When one brainstorms, one momentarily brackets the boundaries which circumscribe reality to catch a glimpse of life as it ought to be lived. Writes Thomas Gordon,

This is the creative part of problem-solving. It is frequently hard to come up with a good solution right away but the initial solutions will nearly always stimulate better ones.<sup>11</sup>

The third step is assessing the feasibility of alternative solutions or reality testing. Brainstorming would be a flight of fantasy were it not grounded in reality testing and a firm recognition of the limits of change. Reality-testing is a process of negotiating between what is wished for (the ideal solution) and what is possible given the circumstances. It begins when one evaluates the solutions to a problem in light of what is feasible within the context of the overall problem-situation. Many strategies and plans of action will eventually have to be discarded for being impractical. Reality testing, like politics, is the art of the possible.

Step four is deciding on an acceptable solution to the problem. Decision-making is the climax of the whole problem-solving process. Generating possible solutions is only fruitful when it culminates in the willingness to make a decision to do something different. Often, people gain a certain amount of insight into the

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 44.

nature of a problem without being motivated to take the difficult step of deciding upon a course of action.

William Glasser calls attention to this difficulty in his book Reality Therapy. He writes,

Understanding the obstacle does not produce a change in his behavior: that happens only through learning better and more responsible ways to action now. Unfortunately, once he learns about an unconscious obstacle that can justify his behavior, he uses it as an excuse not to change.<sup>12</sup>

Only after a decision has been made does a person take ownership of the problem situation and its resolution.

Step five is implementing a solution. Here a plan of action is put into effect. John Dewey's principle that one only learns by doing is a fundamental value. The process of implementation is analogous to a program of exercise; the more one does it the stronger the ego-muscles become. The successful try-out of a plan gives a person a sense of competence and fulfillment. No matter how small the success, one experiences oneself as the cause of an effect and in control over one's immediate environment. The completion of a task gives the participant the motivation and the renewed power to try larger adventures in problem-solving.

Step six is one of evaluation and planning. Not all decisions and plans of action are successful. Solutions to problems need to be evaluated on an on-going basis to allow for modification or change if necessary. Receiving feedback from outside sources can help one

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<sup>12</sup>William Glasser, M.D., Reality Therapy: A New Approach to Psychiatry (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1975), p. 66.

understand the consequences of actions undertaken. Once a plan of action has been evaluated, then long term planning can begin on the basis of insights already gained.

These six steps are the basic components of the problem-solving process. Each step is part of a skeleton outline which when put into effect, becomes part of a dynamic, interrelated whole. Problem-solving skills can be applied to a wide range of social concerns once a target area has been identified. The steps can be adapted to casework, group work and community work modes of social intervention. It is this process which offers pastoral care the possibility for a new and comprehensive approach to the tasks of Christian ministry.

#### Problem-Solving in the Context of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care, as has been noted, bears many similarities to other helping professions in society. It shares with social work, counseling, and community work a common pool of values, methods, and knowledge. What distinguishes pastoral care from these other practices are the goals towards which ministry is directed. Pastoral care begins and ends with goals established on the basis of a Biblical understanding of what God is doing in the world. The goal context of pastoral ministry is God-centered; revealed in God's mighty acts in the presence of Jesus Christ.

Problem-solving, in essence, is simply a method of decision-making and conflict-resolution. Outside of

a goal-context, problem-solving has no value. Like the scientific method, problem-solving can be directed to purposes of good and evil. Thus, the value of problem-solving is dependent upon its mode of intentionality.

The mode of intentionality of pastoral care is structured by the promises of the Gospel. Pastoral care is a helping activity which "stretches out" towards the future in anticipation of real possibilities that have been proclaimed in the life of Jesus Christ. Pastoral care intends shalom; the time when society is characterized by peace, justice, harmony and wholeness. Pastoral care is an instrument of God's plan expressed in the book of Ephesians as a "plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him (Christ), things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:10). The goal of pastoral care is to help bring human life, in all dimensions of personal, interpersonal, and social existence, to fulfillment. It is a ministry of service undertaken in quest of the promise revealed in Christ. "For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority" (Colossians 2:9-10).

When problem-solving is incorporated into pastoral care it takes on the mode of intentionality of Christian ministry. Problem-solving, in the context of pastoral care, is a way of being intentional about the social demands of the Gospel. The Gospel calls all believers



into an action-oriented ministry of service and care. We are summoned to fulfill the commands of the covenant (Jeremiah 11:1); to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8); to take up our cross and follow the Lord (Mark 1:38-39); to prepare the way of the Lord (Mark 1:2); to seek the Kingdom (Matthew 7:7); to repent (Mark 1:4); to take heed and watch (Mark 13:32-37); to take the log out of our own eye (Luke 6:42); to go forth for the sake of God's Kingdom (Luke 18:29); to enter by the narrow gate (Mark 7:13); to be imitators of God and walk in love (Ephesians 5:1); to walk as children of light (Ephesians 5:8); to be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might (Ephesians 5:15). Christian faith is inherently intentional in focus. Jurgen Moltmann writes in Theology of Hope,

For Christian faith lives from the raising of the crucified Christ and strains after the promises of the universal future of Christ. Eschatology is the passionate suffering and passionate longing kindled by the Messiah.<sup>13</sup>

Problem-solving is thus, a way of doing the Word of God; a way of living out in action the Word we have been called to perform (Jeremiah 1:12). Hearing the Word and doing it are two sides of the same coin in the context of Christian ministry. We are not just called to hear the Word and repeat it verbally, we are summoned to do the Word of God as well and to act

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<sup>13</sup> Jurgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1967), p. 16.



out the implications in the midst of our daily lives. Jesus said, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it" (Luke 8:21). The Word of God is heard in the context of deeds. Paul writes, "Whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). Problem-solving is a way of doing what God has willed to be done. It is our goal-oriented response to God's command to seek the Kingdom.

How are problems resolved in the context of pastoral care? Problems are resolved, relationships fulfilled, and social conditions transformed when people begin to respond individually and collectively to the will of God. Problem-solving is an expression of our willingness to participate in God's plan for the fullness of time. God's will is that all problems be resolved, that all barriers which stand in the way of human reconciliation be broken down; and that all principalities and powers which dehumanize human life be transformed in the coming of the Kingdom. "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven" (Matthew 6:10).

Christian faith is an intentional act; it intends the coming of God's Kingdom. Faith is the movement toward and stretching out to the new world not yet visible. It is "the assurance of things hoped for the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1). The life of faith is a journey forward in anticipation

of a future full of possibility. Faith strains after the future in hope that God in Christ is "reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (II Corinthians 5:19).

Problem-solving is an act of faith when it develops in response to God's actions in the world to make and keep human life fully human. God's gracious acts of renewal call for a response from those aware of this power. Problem-solving is an act of faith when it is undertaken in response to God's actions in our lives and in anticipation of the Kingdom which is to come. The nature of problem-solving is transformed by the goals of Christian ministry when the process becomes the instrument for pastoral care.

Problem-solving, as a method of pastoral care, is more than just a model of conflict-resolution, but is a way of participating in God's plan for the fullness of time. Practiced in the context of pastoral care, the basic steps of problem-solving become a way of reaching out toward shalom. The problem-solving model of pastoral ministry operates within the structures of this mode of intentionality; a mode transformed into an instrument of faith by the goals of God's Kingdom.

The remaining chapters present, in detail, the content and scope of the problem-solving model in the practice of pastoral ministry. It will be argued that problem-solving is more than just a mode of social

intervention, but that in broad perspective, it is a way of doing pastoral theology. The problem-solving approach will be described as one which includes:

(1) a theory of human behavior; (2) a comprehensive strategy for social intervention; (3) a theological method; and (4) a normative framework to shape and guide the direction of practice. Problem-solving, in other words, will be presented as a new theological understanding of what it means to be fully human within the context of social relationships and the structures of society at large.

PART II

THE THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE BASE OF PASTORAL CARE

## Introduction

A theory is a collection of concepts, insights and propositions which describe and explain some dimension of human behavior. A theory provides a frame of reference for interpreting and understanding experience. It is useful when it helps us to discover patterns of regularity in human behavior and enables us to make predictions about the course of human events.

The theory of pastoral care is drawn from an interdisciplinary knowledge base. The interdisciplinary approach assumes that no one perspective, not even theology, is self-sufficient, but rather that all perspectives are important, if limited, dimensions of the truth, each in need of the other, in order to be comprehensive in scope. Pastoral care, as an interdisciplinary discipline, uses insights from theology and the human sciences to understand the limitations and the genuine possibilities of a helping ministry. Its theoretical knowledge base is constructed from concepts and propositions which "bridge" the perspectives of theology and the human sciences at the points where there is congruence and correspondence between the respective disciplines.

Pastoral care must integrate a variety of perspectives about human growth and development in order to give its practitioners a working frame of reference for understanding the complexities of problems encountered in pastoral ministry. A broad-based theory



must provide information about human motivation and development, the dynamics and structure of personality, the nature and function of social group relationships, and the influence of social systems, institutions, and the community-at-large upon human behavior. Theory must also provide a value base, or in other words, some answers about what is required to make and keep human life fully human in the world. Here a theological perspective, explaining what God is doing in the world to bring human life to fulfillment, is of utmost necessity.

Pastoral care, as a problem-solving ministry, requires a theoretical knowledge base that explains human behavior in both a personal and social context. Theory must always be adequate to the problems encountered in a community-oriented, community-based program of Christian ministry. The problems encountered in pastoral care are by-in-large social in nature, set within the context of human relationships and significantly influenced by the overall dynamics and forces of community life. Thus, the problem-solving approach to ministry has a particular interest in analyzing and explaining the social dimensions of human behavior in person-to-person, person-to-group, and person-in-community living situations.

## Chapter 4

Human Relationships and the Divine-Human Encounter

Pastoral care begins with the awareness that all life is lived within the context of relationships. It is impossible to understand a person's life without knowing something about the relationships which have influenced and given form to that individual's existence. Human life is relationship-centered. We live and grow in interaction with others; communicating ideas and messages, struggling to resolve common problems, teaching and being taught, forming strong emotional attachments with some, rejecting or being rejected by others; but always relating with and reacting to people around us. No one lives in complete isolation for the effects of human relatedness penetrate even the most isolated of lives. Paul Johnson writes in Psychology of Pastoral Care,

To understand life we will need to focus upon relationships....No single event anywhere in this physical universe has meaning except in relationship to other events. 'Stub your toes on earth,' said one physicist, 'and it will be felt in Mars.' If this is true in the physical world, it is more true in the human world. For human life is more complicated than the physical world, with a complexity that increases the interdependence of living organisms upon each other.<sup>1</sup>

Human Relationships and the Life Cycle

Human life is embedded in a relationship context even prior to birth. It is said that a preliminary

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<sup>1</sup>Paul E. Johnson, Psychology of Pastoral Care (New York, Abingdon and Cokesbury, 1953), p. 33.

relationship is established between a mother and child while the baby is growing in the womb.<sup>2</sup> The mother begins to know her child from the kicks she receives in her side and from the interpretations that she gives to these movements. The child, in turn, experiences organic changes in the mother's body through the placental circulation; changes which are influenced by the mother's emotional conditions. When a mother is excited or excessively worried, she will activate internal secretions which may produce changes in the infant's heart rate, body movements, and intestinal activity.<sup>3</sup> The relationship continues, in a more complex fashion, immediately after the baby is born. The child needs to be fed, bathed, changed, rubbed, powdered, and held. Jersild estimates that bodily contacts between mother and child run into the tens of thousands and that during the first two years alone there are over 3,000 feeding contacts.<sup>4</sup> Every contact contributes to the dynamics of an ongoing interaction process, which in turn establishes the framework for future interpersonal relationships.

The new born child has a variety of needs to which the mother must learn to adapt. Jerome Kegan has described this adaptation process as a "ballet in which

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<sup>2</sup>D.W. Winnicott, The Child, the Family, and the Outside World (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1964). pp. 7-12.

<sup>3</sup>Elizabeth B. Hurlock, Developmental Psychology (New York, McGraw-Hill, 1968), p. 90.

<sup>4</sup>Arthur Jersild, Child Psychology (London, Staples Press, Limited, 1954), p. 63.

each partner responds to the steps of the other."<sup>5</sup> Every baby needs to be fed and every successful feed is dependent on the kind of relationship that a mother has established with her child. Infant feeding, according to D.W. Winnicott, is primarily a matter of putting into practice a "love relationship between two human beings."<sup>6</sup> A mother is never simply giving her child food; she is also providing warmth, companionship, and affection. The act of cleaning up after a child's bowel movement is not just a functional task; it conveys the current mood and disposition of the parent involved. M.M. Shirley has demonstrated, in one study, that even such acts as bathing or dressing a child will be influenced by the attitudes, mannerisms, and personality of the parent involved.<sup>7</sup> Whether an action is gentle or abrupt, patient or impatient, affirming or rejecting, anxious or serene, will contribute to the general relationship dynamics which are formed between a parent and child.

Human growth and development follows a life cycle from birth to death. Each stage of the life cycle presents a set of tasks and needs to which a person must learn to adapt. Infancy is a time when a child

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<sup>5</sup>Jerome Kegan, "The Child: His Struggle for Identity," Saturday Review of Literature, XVIII (December, 1968), pp. 80-82.

<sup>6</sup>Winnicott, op. cit., p. 30.

<sup>7</sup>M.M. Shirley, "Impact of the Mother's Personality upon the Child," Smith College Studies in Social Work, XII (1941), pp. 14-15.

is dependent on human relationships that will provide the infant with what Eric Erikson has called a basic "sense of trust."<sup>8</sup> The child can only achieve this trust when it in fact learns that the relationships upon which it depends for its livelihood are consistently reliable and trustworthy. The toddler stage is a time of expansion and exploration; a time when parents must learn to be firm yet flexible so as not to crush the initiative and emerging self confidence that the child is beginning to establish. During the oedipal period, the child must come to terms with his or her gender identity and the child's relationship with people of the same and opposite sex in the family matrix. The juvenile needs to develop a sense of industry, and to channel his constructive energies into work and play in a new social environment, the school. Adolescence is an especially critical time in human development; a time of heightened sexual feelings but even more important a period in life when the basic "ego-identity" of an individual is established.<sup>9</sup> The adolescent has a particular need for relationships in which his or her own unique contributions are acknowledged and where a positive self-image can be affirmed. The subsequent stages of young adulthood, middle age, and old age have their own sets of needs

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<sup>8</sup>E.H. Erikson, "Growth and Crises of the Human Personality," in Richard S. Lazarus and Edwin M. Opton, Jr., eds., Personality (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1970), p. 172.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 202.



and tasks which can only be fulfilled within the context of human relationships.

### The Self and Others

The human self develops in dynamic interaction with others. Our own self image, the feelings we have about ourselves, the person we imagine ourselves to be emerges in response to the way others respond to us. John Powell comments, "Our lives are shaped by those who love us and those who refuse to love us."<sup>10</sup> If others respond to us in such a way as to indicate that we are loveable, valuable, and worthwhile, we will begin to regard ourselves as such. If on the other hand, we are constantly rejected, rebuffed, and criticized, we will in all likelihood develop negative self images about who we are as a person.

John Powell in Why Am I Afraid to Love? has compared the human personality to the bud of a flower.<sup>11</sup> When a flower receives warmth from the sun and nourishment from the soil the bud opens up and reveals all its beauty and radiance. But if the sun disappears and it begins to rain and turn cold, the bud of the flower will soon close up and wither on the vine. So is it with the human personality. When people live in a social environment in which they receive love, support, and recognition from others, their personalities open up

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<sup>10</sup>John Powell, Why Am I Afraid to Love? (Niles, Argus Communications Co., 1972), p. 71.

<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

and they experience the fullness of what it means to be human. When, on the other hand, the social environment is cold, hostile, and non-supportive, the personality closes up and the mechanisms of repression and suppression take over.

Martin Buber, in his book I and Thou, describes two forms of social interaction and human relatedness which he labels I-It and I-Thou. The I-It relationship is one in which people treat each other as objects to be manipulated and controlled -- life is categorized, classified and objectified; a relationship is established for pragmatic or utilitarian purposes and in the end one of the partners usually finds a way to exploit or dehumanize the other. The I-It relationship between individuals is never balanced or reciprocal; one person always commands more power and demands more control than the other. The I-Thou relationship, on the other hand, is one of openness, mutuality, and reciprocity. I-Thou is an encounter in which one experiences the other as a person and oneself as an authentic I. In the I-Thou encounter each individual is affirmed and confirmed in his or her own uniqueness. Buber writes,

The basis of man's life with man is two-fold, and it is one -- the wish of every man to be confirmed as what he is, even as what he can become, by men; and the innate capacity in man to confirm his fellowmen in this way.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Martin Buber, "Distance and Relation," Psychiatry, XX (May, 1957), p. 102.

In an I-Thou relationship, authentic independence is achieved in the context of mutual interdependence, and selfhood is discovered not in isolation but at the juncture of the "in-between" where relationships are formed and experienced.

### Problems in Human Relationships

One reason we have become so acutely aware of human relationships in diagnostic theory is that relationship-formation has become a major problem in society today. We live in a time of serious and pervasive breakdown in many of the basic social units within community life: marriage, family life, the extended family, ethnicity, neighborhood ties, and general community consciousness. One out of every two marriages in America now ends in divorce. These divorces effect the lives of more than one million children each year. It is estimated that at least one million teenagers per year, most of them from middle-class families, run away from home.<sup>13</sup> Matt Clark writes in an article for Newsweek Magazine entitled, "Troubled Children: The Quest for Help,"

Despite all the talk about America's child-centered society and all the best sellers purporting to tell parents how to raise happy, well-adjusted youngsters, the number of emotionally troubled children is appallingly high. By the most conservative estimate at least 1.4 million children under the age of 18 have emotional problems of sufficient severity to warrent urgent attention.

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<sup>13</sup>Kenneth L. Woodward and Phyllis Malamud, "The Parent Gap," Newsweek (September 22, 1975), p. 48.

As many as 10 million more require psychiatric help of some kind if they are ever to achieve the potential that medical progress on other fronts has made possible.<sup>14</sup>

Problems arise when the dynamics which constitute every human relationship are out of balance. The term dynamic refers to the transfer of energy and the balance of energy within any particular field of force. Dynamics in physics is that branch of study which is concerned with forces that produce motion and the complex ways that motion is influenced by the application of force. Dynamic psychology is concerned with the motion and equilibrium forces which exist between people and their social environment. The dynamics of human relationships are often polar in nature; each pole exerting an important and vital influence upon the total functioning of the relationship. If one dimension of the bi-polarity is lost, the balance of forces within a relationship is disrupted and problems emerge.

Human relationships are structured by the polar dynamics of love, power, and justice.<sup>15</sup> The success of every authentic relationship is dependent on our ability to preserve a delicate balance which exists between the forces of (1) love and will-power;

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<sup>14</sup>Matt Clark, "Troubled Children: The Quest for Help," Newsweek (April 8, 1974), p. 52.

<sup>15</sup>The following discussion on love, power, and justice has been influenced by the insights of two books: Paul Tillich's Love, Power, and Justice and Rollo May's Love and Will. Rollo May uses the term "will" in ways that we believe to be similar to Tillich's use of the term "power." At times, both authors combine the terms, as Nietzsche did, and speak of the will-to-power.



(2) power and justice; and (3) love and justice. When these reciprocal balances break down, problems result. In other words, a problem in human relationships is the result of a breakdown in the reciprocal balance between the forces of love, power, and justice and a failure to integrate these interrelated dynamics into the forms and content of every human encounter, whether it be person-to-person, person-to-group, or person-in-community interactions. Thus, the diagnostic focus of the problem-solving method of pastoral care begins with an understanding of the relationship between the three fundamental components of all human encounter: love, power, and justice.

Love and will are reciprocal and mutually supportive dynamics in every authentic relationship. Love and will, in balance within a relationship, is the basic component of an I-Thou encounter between self and other in which there is space for self-assertion and participation, affirmation and confirmation, individuality and union. Rollo May writes in Love and Will,

Both love and will are conjunctive forms of experience. That is, both describe a person reaching out, moving toward the other, seeking to affect him or her or it -- opening himself so that he may be affected by the other. Both love and will are ways of molding, forming, relating to the world and trying to elicit a response from it through the person whose interest or love we covet. Love and will are interpersonal experiences which bring to bear power to influence others significantly and to be influenced by them.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Rollo May, Love and Will (New York, W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1969), p. 276.



Paul Tillich describes will-power as "the self affirmation of a being in spite of non-being."<sup>17</sup> According to Rollo May, when Nietzsche used the term "will to power" he meant neither "will" nor "power" in the modern sense of the terms but rather "self-realization" or "self-actualization."<sup>18</sup> The term power, coming from the Latin "posse" means "to be able" or "to be." Will-power is the power of being which pushes all life forward towards fulfillment, independence, and human autonomy. It is the power of being able to make responsible choices for things that matter and are of significance; the ability to be intentional about one's life and its future; and most important to affirm the unique gifts of one's own personality.

Love manifests itself in a variety of ways: as sexuality (libido), in creation and procreation (eros), as friendship (philia), and as sacrificial devotion (agape). Love is a form of participation and union between two persons; it is the merger of two individual lives into one without either person denying or diminishing their own individuality or integrity. The paradox of love is that two individuals achieve their greatest fulfillment as individuals within the context of their relatedness. Writes Paul Tillich,

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<sup>17</sup>Paul Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice (London, Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 40.

<sup>18</sup>Rollo May, Power and Innocence: A Search for the Source of Violence (New York, Dell Publishing Company Inc., 1976), p. 20.

Therefore, there is no person without an encounter with other persons. Persons can grow only in the communion of personal encounter, Individualization and participation are interdependent on all levels of being.<sup>19</sup>

Problems develop in human relationships when the reciprocal balance between the forces of love and will is suspended. The drive of will-power without love can easily become an attempt by one individual to manipulate and control another with little sensitivity to the other person's needs. The will to power becomes the will for power over others, jeopardizing the possibility for a union which preserves the integrity of both participants. Without love, the will-to-power becomes self interested, and selfish, looking for ways of self fulfillment in complete disregard for the needs and rights of others. Love, on the other hand, needs power and will-power in order to be full. A relationship of love without will is shallow and superficial and without the strength and determination needed for long term responsibilities and mature commitments. It is a "generalized love" unable to accept the limitations involved in choosing one person as the recipient of one's love or of entering into a love relationship that is personal, concrete, and embodied. Love without will is an emotional attachment that remains on the surface because the love fails to penetrate the center of the personality at the point where love and will exist in unity. Problems emerge when the balance between the forces of

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<sup>19</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I (Digswell Place, James Nisbet and Company Limited, 1960), p. 196.

love and will is upset.

Justice is the form that human relationships take when each person recognizes the claim of the other to be whole, to be human, to live with dignity and integrity. Every relationship is an encounter between two individual autonomous wills; each individual will desiring to assert the strength of its own being. When two persons exert the strength of their wills in a relationship, a field of force is created between them. Justice gives structure to the power dynamics within every field of force. It demarcates the limits which are necessary if two individuals are to mutually assert their intrinsic claims to humanity, to be responsible, and proceed in such a way that neither violates the fundamental rights of the other. The exercise of power without limits is tyranny. The limit of power is at the boundary of the ego of the other individual to whom one wishes to relate. Paul Tillich writes in Love, Power, and Justice,

But there is a limit for man which is definite and which he always encounters, the other man. The other one, the 'thou,' is like a wall which cannot be removed or penetrated or used....Man can refuse to listen to the intrinsic claims of the other one. He can disregard his demand for justice. He can remove or use him. He can try to transform him into a manageable object, a thing, a tool. But in doing so he meets the resistance of him who has the claim to be acknowledged as an ego. And this resistance forces him either to meet the other one as an ego or to give up his own ego-quality.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>20</sup>Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice, op. cit., p. 78.

The power of being is corrupted by the will to power whenever authentic human needs go unfulfilled and become neurotic, driving individuals in relentless pursuit of their own self interests in violation of the rights and interests of others. Under such conditions the wish for food, sex, alcohol, knowledge, material gain or the concentration of power itself becomes unlimited, monopolizing the whole orientation of a person's behavior. Tillich calls this condition "concupiscence" and describes it as "the unlimited desire to draw the whole of reality into oneself."<sup>21</sup> People with neurotic needs find it difficult to respect the rights of others or preserve the limits necessary if both individuals are to have the opportunity to fulfill authentic needs in mutual interaction.

A reciprocal balance between power and justice is therefore difficult to maintain. Justice is a balance of power within every field of force; it includes a sense of fairness, equality, proportionality and a recognition of intrinsic human rights. Power without justice is dehumanizing and autocratic; justice without power is impotent. A relationship that integrates power and justice, therefore, will preserve the vitality of two individual lives while still guaranteeing an exchange that is mutual, equitable, and right for all concerned.

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<sup>21</sup>Tillich, Systematics, II op. cit., p. 59.

It is easy to understand the need for justice within the context of power. It is less easy to understand the relationship that exists between justice and love. Justice gives form to both power and love. It defines the parameters of human responsibility even within a loving relationship. Without justice, love easily becomes a form of submission to the wishes of the dominant person. Indiscriminate infatuation which sacrifices human rights, principles, and limits in the presence of a loved one can as quickly produce an unjust relationship as the indiscriminate use of power. Love and justice, likewise, exist in reciprocal balance; an insight suggested in the Psalms where it is written: "Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet; righteousness and peace will kiss each other" (Psalms 85:10).

Love needs justice if it is not to become a form of surrender, but justice in turn requires love for its fulfillment. Justice gives structure to human relatedness on the basis of proportionality, equity, and an objective sense of fairness. The norms of justice are universal, applicable in a general fashion to every human situation. When, however the norms of justice are applied generally, irrespective of the particular context of a problem situation, they can become harsh, cold, and rigidly objective. Justice without love is incapable of mercy and forgiveness when it is needed. Problems arise in concrete situations and reflect the particular characteristics of two unique personalities. The result



is that an objective assessment of the justice or lack of justice of a problem situation may not be the full answer for a problem situation that calls for something more than just equity, such as the need for forgiveness and self-sacrifice that is found only in agape. Love goes beyond the limits of justice to bring a relationship to fulfillment. If justice keeps love honest, love transforms justice into an act of reconciliation.

Paul Tillich writes,

Love does not do more than justice demands, but love is the ultimate principle of justice. Love reunites, justice preserves what is to be united. It is the form in which and through which love performs its work. Justice in its ultimate meaning is creative justice and creative justice is the form of reuniting love.<sup>22</sup>

Human problems result when there is a breakdown in the dynamic balance between the forces of love, power, and justice. Our inability to preserve the reciprocal balance of these fundamental dynamics by our own efforts raises the theological question about what it takes to make and to keep human relationships fully human and authentic. This question points to a theological examination of human relationships within the context of the Divine-human encounter.

#### God's Presence in the Midst of Human Relationships

The basic point of departure of Christian faith is that human relationships are renewed and fulfilled in the context of our encounter with God in the world --

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<sup>22</sup>Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice, op. cit., p. 71.

an encounter fully experienced in the presence of Jesus Christ. The transcendent and immanent power of God is the source of strength which sustains every authentic encounter between person and person. In other words, the horizontal dimension of our relationship with each other is undergirded by a verticle relationship with God. Living in right relationship with others is a response to God's active presence in our midst. In the midst of Divine-human encounter the self is truly experienced, in Buber's terms, as an "I" and the other as a "Thou." God's action in the world is the fundamental power which sustains the bi-polar and reciprocal balance between the forces of love, power, and justice in human relationships.

We encounter God by being called into relationship with God and with other persons. This two-fold relationship is, in fact, the foundational structure of all human existence. The Divine-human and person-to-person encounter constitutes the very essence of created order. This relationship is not simply an outgrowth or by-product of isolated individuals choosing to enter into a social contract; rather the Divine-human relationship is the primary context from which human personality and individuality is established. Reality is relational in nature. Herbert Farmer writes in God and Man,

Man is only distinctively man at all because, -- whether he knows it or not, whether he likes it or not, -- he stands right down to the innermost core and essence of his being, in the profoundest possible relationship to God all the time in an order of persons. If, per impossible, he could

wrench himself out of that relationship, he would cease to be -- Man. For when God creates a man, He creates that relationship by the same act -- without the relationship there would be no man.<sup>23</sup>

Farmer also notes that the God-man and the man-man encounter are not two separate relationships but two poles of one unified relationship. As I encounter God, I meet my neighbor, and as I love my neighbor, I encounter God. We are reminded of verses from I John 4:20, "If any one says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen." The Divine-human relationship and the authentic person-to-person relationship are interrelated dynamics at the center of created order. The authentic I-Thou encounter can only occur when grounded in the power of God's active presence in our midst. The Divine-human encounter exerts a transcendent claim upon every authentic interpersonal relationship.

To encounter God in the world is to be addressed and claimed by God as Divine Other. The initiative rests with God; it is God who acts in the midst of human relationships and we who respond. As a child responds to his parents in trust because he has first experienced trust and support from them; so too, our ability to respond in love and experience authentic relationships is based on the fact that we have first been sustained by God's creative love. "We can give

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<sup>23</sup>Herbert Farmer, God and Man (London, Nisbet and Company Ltd., 1948), p. 68.

ourselves to God in love," writes Emil Brunner, "because He has given Himself to us."<sup>24</sup> The Divine-human encounter is a gift which we gratefully receive as God acts in the world to lead all human relationships toward wholeness and fulfillment. One does not encounter God by one's own efforts alone. In the attempt to achieve grace by seeking, we transform God's Thou into an It; we make God into an object of our quest. The I-Thou encounter between God and man is what Maurice Friedman has called "a finding without seeking."<sup>25</sup> Martin Buber also expresses this "gift-like" quality of the I-Thou encounter between God and man with the words,

The You enters me by grace --  
it cannot be found by seeking.  
The You encounters  
me.<sup>26</sup>

#### God's Activity as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer

The reciprocal balance between the forces of love, power, and justice within human relationships is undergirded by the three-fold nature of God's actions in the world. God is active in the midst of human affairs as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer. The three-fold activities of God as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer represent three distinct but interrelated ways that God is experienced

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<sup>24</sup>Emil Brunner, The Divine-Human Encounter (London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1944), p. 43.

<sup>25</sup>Maurice Friedman, Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Limited, 1955), p. 71.

<sup>26</sup>Martin Buber, I and Thou, trans. by Ronald Gregor Smith (Edinburgh, T. and T. Clark, 1970), p. 62.



in the world. Creation, judgment, and redemption are three modes of encounter between God and human beings. We do not encounter three separate gods, rather we have three integrated and integrating experiences of one God who is Lord and Sovereign over all. It is the three-fold nature of God's actions in the world which sustain the reciprocal dynamics between the forces of love, power, and justice in human relationships.

We experience God in the world as the Alpha and Omega of all Creation -- the ground of all Being.

"In the beginning God created the heaven and earth  
(Genesis 1:1).

Worthy art thou, our Lord and God  
to receive glory and honour and power  
for thou didst create all things  
and by thy will they existed and were created.

Revelation 4:11

We exist and have our being because of God's creative will and power. The Genesis narrative is a testimony to the sovereign power of God's creative will at the center of all creation.

God's creation is good. "And God saw everything that he made and behold it was very good" (Genesis 1:31). God created persons in His own image and bestowed upon them dignity and worth. The author of Psalms 8 writes,

Yet thou has made him little less than  
God, and dost crown him with glory and honour.  
Thou has given him dominion over the works  
of thy hand...

Psalms 8:5-6

The movement of human life toward self-actualization, self realization, and self-affirmation is a response



to God's bestowal of power and glory upon us. Because God is acting in the world to create all things anew (Revelation 21:5), we as human beings are able to assert the power of creative being. The power of being is the power of God acting in the world intending that all human life move toward fulfillment of its inherent potentiality. We are called to be self-affirming autonomous beings with power and dignity because God's creation is good, the power of being is good, and our participation in the ground of all being gives to us the freedom to be the people we are able to be. The experience of God's goodness in all creation is the source of our power to be human.

There is a vast difference, however, between human life as created and human interaction as it exists in every day events. In our ability to assert the power of being, which is good, lies the potential of usurping this power from others and making ourselves the center of all creation. At the center of our freedom is the potential for sin, the estrangement of life from the fullness of God's love and harmonious relationships with others in relentless quest of our own selfish interest at the expense of those around us. Sin is the potential within freedom to transform the power of being into a conquest for power over others. Our will-to-power is used in such a way as to defy the limits of justice inherent in every human encounter, and in defiance we disrupt the delicate reciprocity which exists between

love, power, and justice in our relationships. Writes Reinhold Niebuhr in The Nature and Destiny of Man,

The Christian estimate of human evil is so serious precisely because it places evil at the very center of human personality: in the will. This evil cannot be regarded complacently as the inevitable consequence of his finiteness or the fruit of his involvement in the contingencies and necessities of nature. Sin is occasioned precisely by the fact that man refuses to admit his 'creatureliness' and to acknowledge himself as merely a member of a total unity of life. He pretends to be more than he is.... Man contradicts himself within the terms of his true essence. His essence is free self-determination. His sin is the wrong use of his freedom and its consequent destruction.<sup>27</sup>

Every human relationship embodies the potential for good or for evil within the delicate balance of polar forces that co-exist in every human encounter. When the will to power becomes a conquest for power, as a result of a quest to make ourselves the center of the universe in God-like fashion, the dynamics of relationships become distorted, lop-sided, and unjust. In the context of injustice we experience a second dimension of God's activity in the world; we encounter God as Judge.

God, who is active in all events, is One who is encountered as both Creator and Judge. The judgment of God extends to the whole of creation for God is Lord and Sovereign over all. "He will judge the world with righteousness, and the peoples with his truth" (Psalms 96:13). The prophet Amos cries out, "but let justice

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<sup>27</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, The Nature and Destiny of Man: Human Nature, I (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1964), p. 16.

roll down like waters and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24). And the prophet Jeremiah proclaims "the Lord has an indictment against the nations; he is entering into judgment with all flesh, and the wicked he will put to the sword" (Jeremiah 25:31).

We encounter God as Judge when human relationships cease to take the form of justice. God's judgments fall upon the imbalance of power in human relationships which result when people pretend to be gods. The imbalance of power can occur within the context of human relationships, organizations or in communities at large. The judgment of God falls upon every form of human encounter which fails to embody the principles of justice. "The wrath of God," writes St. Paul, "is revealed from heaven, against all ungodliness and wickedness of men who by their wickedness suppress the truth" (Romans 1:18).

God intends that social transactions take place in accordance with the norms of justice and equality. The Book of Deuteronomy speaks of justice in just these terms:

A full and just weight you shall have, a full and just measure you shall have; that your days may be prolonged in the land which the Lord your God gives you.

Deuteronomy 25:15

God's purpose as Judge is to renew a just balance of power within human relationships and the society at large. Judgment, however, is not the last word about human

life; rather, the last word is God's act of redemption in Christ.

God's work as Creator and Judge is inseparable from His work as Redeemer. The end purpose of all God's actions is to reconcile men and women into the love of Jesus Christ. In the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, we are able to see the purpose of God's plan. "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (II Corinthians 5:19). "God showed his love for us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). This message is directed not only to the righteous but also to the sinners and the unjust. "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10).

God actualizes and fulfills his acts of Creation and Judgment in the act of Redemption. God creates out of love, and judges in mercy; God asserts his sovereign Will by giving Himself to us in the sacrifice of His Son on the Cross. God does not over-power us but, instead, takes the sins of the world upon His shoulders in the death of Christ. The act of Redemption allows us to experience God's presence as the integrated unity of creation, judgment, and redemption.

God acts in the midst of the world to lead all human relationships toward fulfillment. The Divine-human encounter is an integrated and integrating experience in which the three-fold nature of the

Godhead: God as Creator, Judge, and Redeemer, undergirds and supports the interpersonal dynamics of love, power, and justice in human relationships. God's presence in the midst of human interaction strengthens, sustains, and renews the delicate balance of polar forces which exist in person-to-person, person-in-group, and person-in-community events. The Divine-human encounter exerts a claim upon human relationships that transforms the very nature of human encounter. It is the foundational relationship at the center of all being which makes and keeps human interaction fully human.



## Chapter 5

Social Transactions in the Community

The context of human life extends beyond relationships, per se, into the larger parameters of the communities where we live and work. While the inner matrix of our lives is structured by the close-knit relationships we have with family and friends, the outer matrix is shaped by the social environment of the community. Community life is the way people organize their behavior to provide food, shelter, clothing, and educational opportunities for their families. The air we breathe, the levels of noise we hear, the dangers of crime and violence, and the availability of public transport, shopping centers, and social amenities are all important dimensions of community life which impinge upon human behavior. Community life is affected by the "macro" social forces within society: for example the social fact that by 1980 over 90% of Americans will be living in urban areas; or that according to the Census bureau, one out of six household dwellings in America are in dilapidated or substandard condition; and that according to FBI reports, someone is being murdered in the United States every 58 minutes, raped every 38 minutes, robbed every 6 minutes and burgled every 39 seconds (based on studies in 1960).<sup>1</sup> To understand the effects of community

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<sup>1</sup>Mitchell Gordon, Sick Cities: Psychology and Pathology of American Urban Life (Baltimore, Penguin Books, 1966), pp. 13-26. See also pages 160 and 387.

life on human behavior, however, one needs to know more than just statistics; one needs to feel the rhythm and tempo of street life, to experience the music, sounds, tastes, smells, and the vitalities of the neighborhood; and the customs, traditions, and ceremonies of a people. The ethos of a community's life is captured in the poetry of Piri Thomas,

This is a bright mundo, my streets, my barrio de noche,  
With its thousands of lights, hundreds of millions  
of colors  
Mingling with noises, swinging street sounds of cars  
and curses,  
Sounds of joys and sobs that make music. If any one  
listens real close, he can hear its heart beat.<sup>2</sup>

#### The Function of a Social Transaction

Social transactions are necessary to satisfy basic human needs. A person's ability to get a job, to find an apartment, to work for an educational degree, or to take a sick child to the local health clinic are all forms of social transactions. Some transactions are so much part and parcel of everyday life that we take them for granted; although as John Helmer has pointed out in an article on urban life, many commonplace social transactions have become problematical for those who live in the city today. Helmer writes,

The dynamics of simple economic exchanges...of elementary physical security on the street and in the home -- these and many other commonplace transactions, events, and experiences are cause for continuous and fateful decision making on urban

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Piri Thomas, Down These Mean Streets (New York, Signet Books, 1968), p. i.

man's part.<sup>3</sup>

A social transaction is any action by which a person brings about change in his or her social environment in order to achieve an intended goal. It is the modification of one's social milieu so as to fulfill basic human needs which have not been met. A transaction, according to Webster's Collegiate Dictionary, Fifth Edition, involves conducting a negotiation or activity to a conclusion or settlement; a term derived from the Latin "trans" meaning across, and "agere" -- to drive or lead. Alfred Kuhn in The Study of Society, using concepts from general systems theory, defines transaction as "an exchange of goods between two parties and the accompanying negotiations."<sup>4</sup> But a social transaction is more than just an exchange of goods; it involves a broad range of attempts to mobilize energy, resources and skills in order to intentionally accomplish a planned social objective.

Problems develop in life whenever and wherever a person is unable to complete a social transaction necessary to fulfill a basic human need. The ability to achieve social transactions is closely related to our overall sense of competence as persons. Writes Robert White in an article, "Competence and the Psychosexual

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<sup>3</sup>John Helmer, "Introduction," in John Helmer and Neil A. Eddington, eds., Urbanman: The Psychology of Urban Survival (New York, The Free Press, 1974), pp. vii-viii.

<sup>4</sup>Alfred Kuhn, The Study of Society (London, Tavistock Publications, 1963), p. 317.

## Stages of Development,"

Competence means fitness or ability. The competence of an organism means its fitness or ability to carry on those transactions with the environment which result in its maintaining itself, growing, and flourishing.<sup>5</sup>

Problem-solving, itself, is a form of social transaction. Thus, the problem-solving method of pastoral care focuses on a person's ability or inability to satisfy basic needs through social transactions in the community in which the person lives.

Fundamental to the understanding of a social transaction is the concept of power. The dynamic of power is inherent in every effort to attain a social goal or resolve a social problem. Power is to social action as electricity is to light; it's the source of its energy. Power, like energy is ubiquitous and may appear in many different forms. We speak of corporate power, political power, organizational power, the power of the ballot box, police power, and the power of military force. A social transaction cannot be accomplished unless there is enough power necessary to mobilize the energy, resources, and skills needed for change.

"Power" according to Alfred Kuhn is "the ability to satisfy one's wants through control of preferences and/or opportunities."<sup>6</sup> Eli Chinoy in Society defines power

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<sup>5</sup>R.W. White, "Competence and the Psychosexual Stages of Development," in Richard S. Lazarus and Edward M. Opton, Jr., eds., Personality (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books Ltd., 1967), p. 145.

<sup>6</sup>Kuhn, op. cit., p. 317.

as "the ability to influence decisions that affect, directly or indirectly, the lives and actions of others as well as one's own fate."<sup>7</sup> Amitai Etzioni, in The Active Society emphasizes the achievement of societal goals: "We view societal power as a form of mobilization of social energy in the service of societal goals."<sup>8</sup> Common to all these definitions of power is: (a) the ability to change, control or modify one's social environment; (b) the ability to overcome resistances or restrictions encountered within any particular field of force; and (c) the resources necessary for reaching a chosen objective.

Every individual in society needs a relative degree of power in order to carry out social transactions necessary for human survival. Problems arise, however, when there is an imbalance in the distribution of resources within society. Some people, by virtue of their power base, have greater access to society's total resources than other people. Mr. Smith, because of his occupation, family background, property assets, and political influence may have a greater advantage in conducting social transactions than Mr. Jones who lacks such resources. A hierarchical distribution of power in society means that certain individuals, families,

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<sup>7</sup>Eli Chinoy, Society (New York, Random House, 1967), p. 323.

<sup>8</sup>Amitai Etzioni, The Active Society (London, Collier-MacMillan Ltd., 1968), p. 315.



and groups have unequal access to the major benefits in the community, e.g. schools, housing, and other social amenities. Those persons furthest removed from the organizational centers of power will have the least ability to satisfy basic human needs through social transactions, for transactions are dependent upon the amount of social power that any individual or group of individuals can command.

#### Types of Social Transactions

Many transactions are political in nature. Political influence is the ability to exert a claim or make a demand in the arena of politics so as to achieve a desired purpose. Edward C. Banfield, in a classic study entitled Political Influence, defines influence as "the ability to get others to act, think, and feel as one intends."<sup>9</sup> Political influence is the power to get other people and groups in society to change their goals, programs, and policies in a direction more congruent with one's own interests. There is no "unmoved mover" in politics; government actions are made in response to influence.<sup>10</sup> The businessman who is able to change the votes of politicians in his district, the mayor who is able to get voters to approve a bond issue; the farmers who are able to maintain high food subsidies, and the demonstrators who are able to integrate a city swimming

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<sup>9</sup>Edward C. Banfield, Political Influence (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), p. 3.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., pp. 3-20.

pool, all exert various forms of political influence. Each interest group attempts to mobilize resources, skills, and personnel in order to alter political decision-making. Politics, according to Max Weber, is "striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power...."<sup>11</sup>

Political scientists often use the term "political man" to indicate that everyone is influenced in some way or another by political decision-making in the community. These decisions give overall shape and form to the context of community life and make an impact upon the major social forces which influence human behavior. A person's basic sense of competence is affected, directly or indirectly, by his or her ability to influence the decision-making process. Robert Lane notes in Political Life that political participation often has the positive effect upon personality of improving self-image and a basic feeling of autonomy.<sup>12</sup> Lane also says that the act of voting is the "implementation of an emotion" toward a policy, program, or creed that the individual believes is of significance. Voting is an act of affirmation undertaken in the belief

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<sup>11</sup>Max Weber, "Politics as a Vocation," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds., From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York, Oxford University Press, Inc., 1946), p. 78.

<sup>12</sup>For a detailed discussion see Robert E. Lane, Political Life (New York, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959), pp. 124-126.

that individual actions can and do make a difference in shaping the broad contours of community life. No individual would vote unless he or she felt some relatedness to the community at large. Problem situations are often the result of a wide-spread and pervasive feeling of impotence by citizens in relationship to political decision-making.

Social transactions also involve the exchange of goods. The distribution of goods in traditional societies took place in the context of family and tribal customs and relationships. Modern capitalist societies rely on the impersonal forces of supply and demand in the marketplace as the primary mechanism for exchange, although the presence of big business corporations, large labor unions, and the influence of the federal government in the economy has markedly transformed the free market system. Bargaining power is the ability to satisfy one's desires through the exchange of one object A for a preferred object B; sometimes also referred to as purchase power. A person with strong bargaining power will be able to get better terms for his purchases than someone with weak bargaining power. Many families living with multiple conditions of social deprivation are unable to meet basic human needs because they have no resources with which to bargain.

Bargaining power includes one's income, assets, and resources. While a person's income level is perhaps the most important determinant of bargaining power,

it is not the only one. Bargaining power also involves the overall assets, services, and social resources available to persons in the context of community life.

Finally, transactions are necessary in relationship to social services. Some people in a community are unable to make social transactions necessary to maintain a minimum standard of living. In such cases the community or state has assumed responsibility for organizing social services to meet problems of basic human need. Social welfare in Great Britain, America, and other European countries is an organized system of service designed to help individuals and families to live at a minimum subsistence level. Wayne Vasey writes,

In relation to social services, needs are said to exist when what the individual family is able to provide through the efforts of its members fails to meet an implicit or explicit standard considered to be a minimum for health and decency. This must be called the concept of minimum adequacy.<sup>13</sup>

The modern welfare state in Great Britain and to a limited extent in America has accepted responsibility to provide social services so as to abolish problems created by poverty, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness. Often, however, individuals are unable to gain access to the public services that are provided by the state. Many people are unaware of the benefits that are available such as supplementary benefits, rent rebates, etc., or the way one goes about making application for such services. Difficulties often arise

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<sup>13</sup>Wayne Vasey, Government and Social Welfare (New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1958), p. 6.



in the administration of welfare services with some clients fearful of making application because of excessive red tape. In some communities there is social stigma attached to persons who need social welfare; a prejudice which dates back to the days of Poor Law Relief.

Thus, despite the availability of social services, there are often hidden difficulties along the way in gaining access to them. Anthony Forder emphasizes this problem when he writes,

Moreover, those who are least able to fend for themselves are often those who get the worst services, partly because poorer services may be offered them, for example, if they live in the older decaying areas of our towns, and partly because their ignorance, apathy, or powerlessness makes them less able to use the services available or to demand services with the hope of getting them.<sup>14</sup>

#### The Imbalance of Power in Society: The Limits of Justice and Love

A basic characteristic of human society is the struggle for power between individuals, groups, and organizations that exist within the community. No society is free from the concentration of social, economic, and political power or from attempts by groups to organize collectively to achieve common goals and objectives. Communities are composed of diverse interest groups all competing, to some extent, for control over the limited resources, assets, and services available. Power is established whenever one group of persons exercises more control than another within the major

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<sup>14</sup> Anthony Forder, Penelope Hall's Social Services of England and Wales (New York, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1969), p. 300.



social, political, and economic institutions of society. Whether recognized or not, the concentration of power is a reality which can be limited and controlled, but never eliminated.

The goal of a just society is to achieve a balance of power among all the diverse interests represented. Few societies, however have ever achieved this ideal. Our own society has been characterized by the rise of large and powerful business corporations. A.A. Berle maintains that 50% of America's manufacturing is owned by the largest 150 corporations in the country and that 2/3 of the economy's productive assets are owned by less than 500 companies.<sup>15</sup> These giant corporations are represented by such titles as Eastman Kodak, Ford, General Motors, Standard Oil, and International Telephone and Telegraph. John Kenneth Galbraith writes in The New Industrial State that three corporations: General Motors, Standard Oil, and Ford Motor Company, in 1965, had a larger gross income than all the farms in America.<sup>16</sup> The total income of each of these corporations also exceeded the tax income of any single state; and in 1963,

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<sup>15</sup>A.A. Berle, "Economic Power and the Free Society," in Andrew Hacker, ed., The Corporation Take-Over (Garden City, Doubleday Anchor Books, 1965), p. 96.

<sup>16</sup>John Kenneth Galbraith, The New Industrial State (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, Ltd., 1970), p. 84.

the revenues of General Motors were "fifty times those of Nevada, eight times those of New York, and slightly less than one-fifth those of the Federal Government."<sup>17</sup>

Reinhold Niebuhr writes in his book An Interpretation of Christian Ethics,

The very essence of politics is the achievement of justice through equilibria of power. A balance of power is not conflict; but a tension between opposing forces underlies it.<sup>18</sup>

Justice, however, is impossible to achieve when there is a disproportionate concentration of social, economic, and political power. The merger of scientific technology with industrial and corporate methods has made it possible for this kind of power concentration to occur, thereby threatening the very fabric of law and justice in society.

The possibilities for love are also threatened by large concentrations of power within any social system. Love is never the easy answer to social problems in a society characterized by power politics, class interests, and social stratification. Reinhold Niebuhr, in his book An Interpretation of Christian Ethics is critical of Christian liberalism for what he believes is its unlimited faith in the simple possibilities of love as an answer to social change.<sup>19</sup> Niebuhr accuses liberals of a naïve belief in human goodness and in the power of moral suasion. He argues that this position is romantic

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<sup>18</sup> Reinhold Niebuhr, An Interpretation of Christian Ethics (New York, Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1935), p. 189.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 169-198 for a detailed critique of Christian Liberalism.

when applied to social problems of a public nature, where conflict and power is an inherent dimension of political reality. Niebuhr does not deny that love can transcend the limits of egoism and self-interest within the context of personal and interpersonal relationships, and that individual human hearts can be transformed. But he maintains that this is not the full answer for large-scale social and political change which can only occur through organization and collective action. He writes,

Liberal Christianity has not been totally oblivious to the necessary mechanisms and techniques of social justice in economic and political life. But the total weight of its testimonies has been on the side of sentimental moralism. It has insisted that good will can establish justice, whatever the political and economic mechanisms may be. It has insisted on this futile moralism at a moment in history when the whole world faces disaster because the present methods of production and distribution are no longer able to maintain the peace and order of society.

Against this moralism it is necessary to insist that the moral achievement of individual good will is not a substitute for the mechanisms of social control. It may perfect and purify, but it cannot create basic justice. Basic justice in any society depends upon the right organization of men's common labor, the equalization of their social power, regulation of their common interests, and adequate restraint upon the inevitable conflict of competing interests.<sup>20</sup>

Christian love is expressed in the context of society as justice; the harmonious balance between the forces of love, justice, and power inherent in every social transaction. The reality of human sin, self interest,

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<sup>20</sup>Ibid., pp. 181-182.

and finitude, however, makes the achievement of this balance an impossible possibility within human society as presently constructed. Power is abused when wealth and property are held in the hands of a few large corporations. Justice is cold and inflexible when unrelated to the transforming power of love. And love becomes superficial and even manipulative when unrelated to the dynamics of power and justice. The inability of society to maintain this balance points toward the need for a radical transformation in community life; a transformation which establishes the reintegration of love, power, and justice in wholeness; a transformation signaled in the coming of the Kingdom of God.

The Unity of Love, Power, and Justice in the Presence of God's Kingdom

Only in the presence of the Kingdom of God, breaking into the midst of human society; the radical irruption of God's transcendent presence in time and history; do the forces of love, power, and justice become fully united and integrated within community life. "Love, power, and justice," writes Paul Tillich "are united in God and they are united in the new creation of God in the world."<sup>21</sup> The dynamics of love, power, and justice are fully united in the Godhead and reach final completion in the world with the coming of the Kingdom; the consummate encounter with God as Sovereign Power -- omnipotent,

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<sup>21</sup>Paul Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice (London, Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 115.

omniscient, and omnipresent; as Agape -- the fullness of peace and love between all people; and as Grace -- One who graciously forgives and reconciles all creation. In the words of Paul Tillich,

Love, power, and justice are one in the divine ground, they shall become one in human existence. The holy in which they are united shall become holy reality in space and time.<sup>22</sup>

The primary message and focus of Jesus' ministry is the Kingdom of God. The essence of the theme is summarized in a verse from the Gospel of Mark 1:15, "The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand." Not only is the reign of God imminent, as proclaimed in the Lord's Prayer, but the Kingdom is already breaking into the world transforming the foundations of society and the dynamics of human relationships.

The Kingdom of God is not coming with signs to be observed; nor will they say, 'Lo, here it is! There! for behold, the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you.

Luke 17:20-21

The proof that the inbreaking of the Kingdom is already a present reality is seen in the miracles of Jesus' own ministry. "If I by the finger of God drive out demons, then God's reign has come upon you" (Luke 11:20).

The new age is dawning; a new creation is already being born, calling humankind into new forms of social relatedness, new structures for community life, and new dimensions of self-understanding. The present dynamics

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid., pp. 108-109.



of society can no longer be considered determinative of the future course of events in light of this Event. "Behold, something greater than Jonah is here" (Luke 11:32). "Behold, now is the acceptable time, behold, now is the day of salvation" (II Corinthians 6:2). The Reign of God is cutting into the midst of human society so as to draw all forms of social transaction toward fulfillment within the context of community life.

The Kingdom of God is both an inner-historical and a trans-historical reality. The Kingdom confronts the world in two-fold nature; as immanent in the dynamics of human relationships and as transcendent over space and time. The unity of love, power, and justice is both a proleptic reality within the presence of the Kingdom and a future possibility; the Kingdom confronts society as both an "already" in the presence of Jesus Christ, and as a "not yet" with the coming of the universal Messianic reign. The existential tension between the present and future is fundamental to a theological understanding of the work of God's Kingdom. When human beings suspend this tension, they risk absolutizing a limited aspect of God's immanent reality by an act of idolatry. "Demonic consequences result," writes Tillich "from absolutizing the fragmentary fulfillment of the aim of history within history."<sup>23</sup> Thus the Kingdom of God is encountered in the midst of human affairs as part of a tension between promise and fulfillment.

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<sup>23</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, III (Digswell Place, James Nisbet and Company Ltd., 1964), p. 417.

Pastoral care takes place at the intersection of the world as it already exists and the coming of the Kingdom of God. The theological-existential context of problem-solving is the inbreaking of God's Kingdom transforming the content and form of human relationships and community life. It is at the juncture of Kingdom and World that we begin to experience God's presence as the unity of love, power, and justice. Each dynamic expresses a fundamental aspect of God's purpose. Our encounter with God as love, power, and justice becomes the framework for reconciling and making whole the imbalances of power which exist in society as presently constructed.

#### God's Activity as Power, Love, and Justice

God, the Alpha and Omega of all Creation, is One whom we acknowledge as omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. God is the source of all power and the supreme power over Heaven and Earth. This power is manifest not only in creation but in God's divine providence over all the world. John Calvin has written in The Institutes of the Christian Religion,

providence means not that by which God idly observes from heaven what takes place on earth, but that by which, as keeper of the keys, he governs all events... the universe is ruled by God not only because he watches over the order of nature set by himself, but because he exercises special care over each of his works.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup>John Calvin, The Institutes of the Christian Religion, trans by Ford Lewis Battles, I (London, S.C.M. Press, 1910), pp. 202-204.

The sovereignty of God has far-reaching political implications. The realm of politics is of theological concern because God's divine providence extends to all forms of social and political transaction. The inbreaking of God's Kingdom into the midst of human affairs is itself a political event in the broadest sense. Paul Tillich in Systematic Theology calls our attention to the fact that the Biblical concept of "king" points to "the highest and most consecrated center of political control."<sup>25</sup> The term "kingdom" connotes a spatial realm, territory that has a political dimension. The Messianic rule is a time when "There is given Him dominion and glory, and a kingdom, that all people... shall serve him" (Daniel 7:13-14); a time when "the Lord sits enthroned as King forever" (Psalms 29:10).

The transcendent power of God's inbreaking Kingdom transforms the nature of power, force, and coercion in society and makes possible the full integration of love, power, and justice in community life. In the presence of the Kingdom, the divisive forces of power politics are conquered, transformed, and elevated beyond the ambiguities of human history into the realm of the new shalom. The proleptic experience of God's Kingdom in the world reintegrates the broken dynamics of love, power, and justice making human fulfillment possible through social transactions.

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<sup>25</sup>Tillich, op. cit., p. 382.

Agape is the New Testament word for God's love. The author of the Johannine epistle asks us to "love one another for God is love and he who does not love does not know God" (I John 4:7-8). God's love is the love of the Cross, present in the life of Jesus Christ. "Hereby know we love, because He laid down His Life for us" (I John 3:16). The love of God meets us in Jesus Christ as forgiveness and sacrifice. "God sent His only Son into the world...to be the expiation for our sins" (I John 4:10). In Christ, God's love is extended not just to the worthy but to the unworthy; not just to the righteous but to the unrighteous, the sinners, the tax collectors, and the criminals.

The love of God is the gift-like spontaneous outpouring of grace that drives men toward reunion. Love is union and communion with God in and through His Son Jesus Christ. Paul Tillich speaks of love as the power which reunites the estranged; a dynamic which brings individuals into union with each other and into communion with God. Writes Tillich,

Love is the drive towards the unity of the separated. Reunion presupposes separation of that which belongs essentially together....It is the fulfillment and the triumph of love that is able to reunite the most radically separated beings, namely individual persons.<sup>26</sup>

Agape both fulfills and transcends human manifestations of love as libido, eros, and philia.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup>Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

<sup>27</sup>Ibid., pp. 116-125. Here is a full discussion of the relationship between agape and the forces of libido, eros, and philia.



God's love is never divorced from human love but cuts into love, transforming human separation and alienation into forms of creative union and mutual fellowship. Agape, as unambiguous love, conquers and transforms the ambiguities of human transactions: it transforms libidinal love into a sexual unity that affirms the integrity of both individual persons involved in the relationship; it elevates eros from aesthetic detachment into new forms of creative involvement, and it broadens philia, as preferential love for friends and family into universal love for all humankind without exclusion and rejection. As such, Agape is a fundamental aspect of the Kingdom of God, and moves human interaction toward the full integration of love, power, and justice within the context of community life.

Justification by grace through faith is God's act of forgiveness in Jesus Christ for those who have been unjust and abused the limits of power in social transactions, "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:6). Justification by faith is God's gracious gift and is not dependent upon our own efforts to achieve salvation. We do not earn our own justification before God by what we do and say; we receive justification as a gift in spite of ourselves. "By grace are ye saved through faith; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8). Justification by grace is God's act of reconciliation which transcends and completes the limitations of



proportional justice in human society.

God's act of justification by grace transforms civil justice and equity into acts of forgiveness. Civil justice is limited by the law of proportionality. The norm of proportionality, to each according to his due, must be applied equally and universally to all. Proportional justice can be calculated, measured, and objectified.<sup>28</sup> But civil justice cannot take into full consideration the unique aspects of particular, concrete, problem situations; it cannot resolve the kinds of problems which call for a creative application of justice; it cannot reconcile the sinner into the love of others and the love of God. Divine justification reaches out to those people who would be punished and abused under the conditions of proportional justice. When Jesus spoke on the Cross, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), he was speaking not of the righteous and just but of the unrighteous; to those people who had crucified him unjustly. God's act of justification in the context of the Kingdom, completes the work of love, power, and proportional justice in society and establishes the basis for the

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid., pp. 13-15. For a full discussion of the relationship between Being and Justice see pp. 54-71.

final fulfillment and reconciliation of all life in the world.<sup>29</sup>

Social transactions are essential for the fulfillment of basic human needs. Problems develop when people are unable to satisfy needs through social transaction because of an imbalance of power in society; the inability to gain access to vital social resources; and a breakdown, within social encounters, of the essential unity between love, power, and justice. The inbreaking of God's Kingdom into the world creates the possibility of persons completing social transactions in a way that fulfills the basic needs of their own lives and the needs of society at large. Pastoral care takes place at the intersection between the demands of God's Kingdom upon us, and our intentional quest for this goal.

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<sup>29</sup>Many ideas and insights from the above discussion are based on Paul Tillich's book Love, Power, and Justice and, in particular, the final chapter entitled, "The Unity of Love, Power, and Justice in the Ultimate Relation," pp. 107-125.

## Chapter 6

The Diagnosis of a Problem Situation

Diagnosis in pastoral care begins with the problem that has been presented. Whether the problem arises within the context of a relationship, a family, an organization, a neighborhood, or a community at large it is the presented problem which demands immediate attention because it hurts the most. The presented problem may not be the fundamental cause of the distress but it is the problem which at the moment, here and now, most occupies the center of attention. Here is where there has been a breakdown in either person-to-person relationships or in social transactions; here is the starting point for pastoral diagnosis.

Diagnosis is the process of seeking to understand a problem or series of problems so as to determine in what way intervention might be most helpful. It is the reflective side of every helping act, an ongoing inquiry into the problem at hand. All helping actions would be blind and spontaneous were it not for periods of time set aside in order to "see into" and gain empathic understanding of the complex dimensions in every problem situation. Diagnosis is a collaborative and on-going dialogue between two or more persons aimed at discovering insights and explanations which give meaning to patterns of human interaction. Helen Harris Perlman writes in Social Casework: A Problem-solving process,

Diagnosis...is nothing more or less than bringing

into conscious recognition that veritable swarm of intuitions, hunches, insights, and half-formed ideas that we call "impressions"; then scrutinizing them in the light of what knowledge we hold, selecting some as important, casting off others or placing them in our mental filing system for future scrutiny; then putting the pieces together into some pattern that seems to make sense (at least for the nounce in explaining the nature of what we are dealing with and relating it to what should and can be done.<sup>1</sup>

### Understanding the Person-in-Situation

Pastoral diagnosis, as a problem-solving process, aims at understanding human problems in social context. It is an orientation which focuses first and foremost on the social systems and social dynamics that impinge upon the problem situation. Traditionally, the individual person has been treated in isolation, as if human beings were islands of self-sufficient order with no essential relationships to one another. As utilized in pastoral care and in psychotherapy, theories of human personality and behavior have tended to magnify the autonomy of the individual at the risk of ignoring the bonds which unite an individual to others. Seifert and Clinebell note in Personal Growth and Social Change that the "old way of viewing the individual was as if he were a being, separate from others, who walked around in his skin and related to others."<sup>2</sup> The human personality

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<sup>1</sup>Helen Harris Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-solving Process (Chicago, The University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 166.

<sup>2</sup>Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Personal Growth and Social Change: A Guide for Ministers and Laymen as Change Agents (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1969), p. 14.

was treated as a closed system, hermetically sealed, only tangentially and indirectly influenced by the social environment in which all human interaction takes place. Little attention was paid to the reciprocal dynamics which exist between the individual and the larger social systems of which the individual is a part. The underlying assumption was that human beings are primarily independent creatures, not interdependent; self directed, not other-directed; and must learn to face the issues of life and death on their own.

A new point of departure is suggested by the problem-solving model of pastoral care. The working assumption here is that the individual cannot be diagnosed or treated in isolation but only as part of a complex interpersonal configuration. In order to focus on the interpersonal dimensions of all human behavior and interaction, the problem-solving model uses the term "person(s)-in-situation" as a conceptual reference point which breaks down the dichotomy between the individual, on the one hand, and the social environment, on the other.

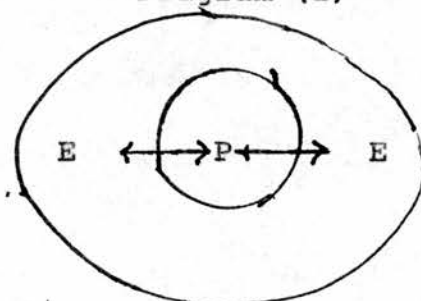
The Gestalt psychologist, Kurt Lewin, has helped us to understand this interaction between the person and the environment by use of the following diagram:<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Calvin S. Hall and Gardner Lindzey, Theories of Personality (New York, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1966), p. 210.



Diagram (1)



$$P + E = \text{Life Space}$$

The person (P) or personality is an open system existing in the midst of a psychological environment (E). Between the boundary of P and E there is always on-going exchange and permeation. The total area within the eclipse, including all that is within the circle (P), is called life space (L). Lewin used the term life space to signify the totality of the external psychological forces which directly impinged upon the internal functioning of the personality system. Life space, explains Hall and Lindsey,

contains the totality of possible facts which are capable of determining the behavior of an individual. It includes everything that has to be known in order to understand the concrete behavior of an individual human being in a given psychological environment at a given time.<sup>4</sup>

For Kurt Lewin, all human behavior was the function of person and his or her environment which he expressed in the mathematical formula  $B=f(p,e,)$ .

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

## Understanding Social Systems

A person-in-situation is a configuration of interacting, ever-expanding social systems. "Social system" according to Talcott Parsons,

is the concept that refers to both a complex of interdependencies between parts, components, and processes that involve discernible regularities of relationship, and to a similar type of interdependency between such a complex and its surrounding environment.<sup>5</sup>

A system is a network of interdependent human relationships. For example, one of the basic systems in society which shapes and molds human personality is the family. Each member of the family is part of a dynamic whole, the total of which is greater than the sum of its individual parts. Within the family there are patterns of behavior, types of relationships, methods of communication and attention getting, some of which meet basic human needs, others which don't, but all of which are consistent over long periods of time. The family system is in turn influenced and affected by other systems in society such as peer groups, associations, clubs, friendship networks, the extended family and forces within the neighborhood at large.

Every major system is composed of a hierarchy of sub-systems all of which are interrelated. Systems function very much like a Calder mobile -- disturb it here and it will jiggle and goggle over there also; a change in any one part will have a ripple effect on

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<sup>5</sup>Talcott Parsons, Social Systems and the Evolution of Action Theory (New York, The Free Press, 1977), p. 177.

all the other parts. In a book entitled, Social Treatment: An Approach to Interpersonal Helping, James Whittaker writes,

It follows, then, that if change occurs in one part of a social system, its effect will be felt in all other parts of the system. For example, if one member of a family is stricken with a serious illness, the effects of that illness, both direct and indirect, will be experienced by all family members. Similarly, because of the interdependency of social systems, changes that occur in one system are likely to have effects in other contiguous systems.<sup>6</sup>

One method used in pastoral care for understanding the important social systems which impinge upon a particular problem situation, is drawing a social unit diagram. The diagram, which is worked on by both the helper and the one being helped, is a composite of all the major persons, groups, organizations, and institutions which are involved in creating, maintaining, and sustaining a human problem. By taking time to construct such a diagram, all the people involved in the problem-to-be-worked get a clearer picture of the "stage setting" on which human interaction is unfolding. A helpful social unit diagram will function like a good stage script -- it will give basic information about the characters involved in the play, the positioning of each character upon the stage, and the patterns of interaction that can be expected. Used in this way, the social unit diagram becomes a way of analyzing the broad contours of the problem situation and locating the points where a helping

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<sup>6</sup>James K. Whittaker, Social Treatment: An Approach to Interpersonal Helping (Chicago, Aldine Publishing Co., 1974), p. 89.

intervention might achieve "maximum reverberation" upon all those involved in the act.

#### A Practical Illustration (1)

Richard Allen, formerly a good natured, friendly, and well-behaved youngster has gradually become withdrawn, even hostile in the presence of his parents and family. In June, Richard had graduated from a small neighborhood primary school where his grades had been high and his motivation excellent, and entered a large secondary school in the city where classes were overcrowded, relationships less personal, and where there was no opportunity for individualized help and attention. At the same time, Mr. Allen, Richard's father, had been laid off from his job as a result of a growing trend of industries relocating in a more prosperous part of the country. The loss of his job has been a blow to Mr. Allen, a proud, hard-working man who has become irritable and depressed because of nothing to do. Serious strains have developed in the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Allen, particularly now that Mrs. Allen has gotten a full time job, and one that is well paying, as a secretary in a lawyer's firm, to make ends meet. Richard's older sister has been managing the household during the day but has had difficulty coping with his four younger brothers, two of whom are under the age of three. Both Richard and his father refuse to help in the running of the household and have remained away from home for long periods during the day. Mr. Allen goes to the local pub

and drinks, and Richard has started to associate with members of a neighborhood gang. The gang has reportedly been involved in vandalism, drugs, and serious street fighting and recently several members were arrested on charges of possessing marijuana. Richard wasn't arrested but the following evening Mrs. Allen discovered a large supply of marijuana in his bedroom. The incident provoked a long and heated argument between Richard and his mother ending with Richard's leaving the house and not returning for three days. When he did return, Richard's mother asked him to accompany her to a nearby multi-service center in the basement of a neighborhood church to speak with a pastoral counselor. Richard agreed to do so.

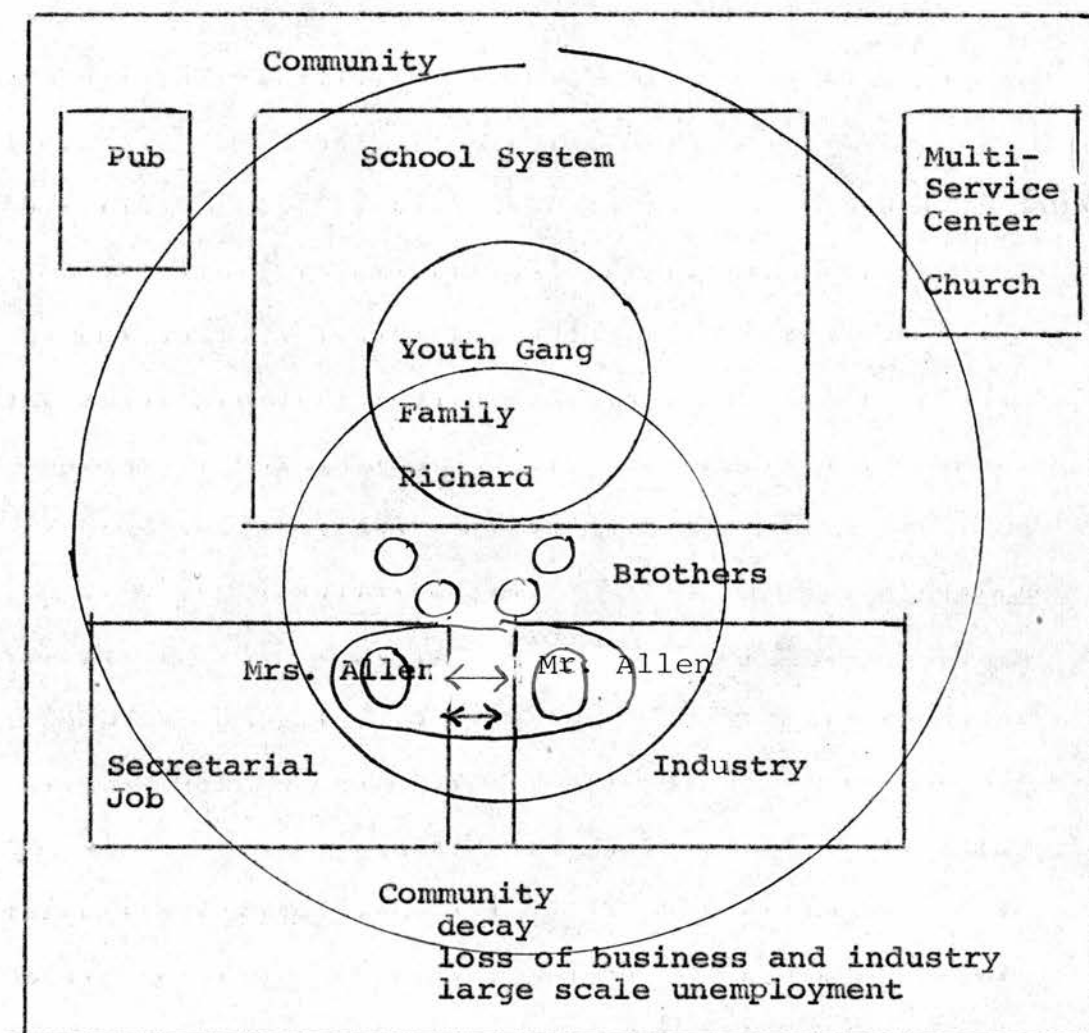
Initially, at first glance, it might appear that Richard should be the sole target of intervention in whatever problem-solving work the pastoral counselor chooses to undertake. On the surface, Richard seems to be the problem: he has run away from home, he has been hostile towards his parents, he has been involved with a youth gang which has been breaking the law, and he has been doing poorly at school. A counselor might be tempted to isolate Richard from the rest of the family and work with him on a one-to-one basis until these different problems were resolved.

Upon completing the social unit diagram, however, it becomes readily apparent that Richard's life intersects with a number of different interpersonal systems in the



community, all of which impinge upon the problem situation.

Diagram (2)



Social Unit Diagram

Richard is part of a family system and many dimensions of his problems are related to dynamics which have been present within his home. Strains have developed in the marital relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Allen, the axis around which other relationships in the family

will be structured. Richard's image of his father has probably been affected by his father's own low self-esteem with the loss of a job. The absence of his mother from the household has undoubtedly contributed towards his growing inclination to stay away from home and take up company with a local youth gang. Richard is reacting to strains that have broken out within the whole family unit.

Relationships within the Allen family, in turn, have been affected by dynamics within other systems in the community. His father's unemployment has been the result of changing economic trends in that part of the country, Richard's mother has had to compensate for the loss of her husband's income by taking a full time job which keeps her away from the household until late in the evening. Richard's life has been influenced by the school system and the contrast between a small neighborhood primary school and a large inner-city secondary school. The neighborhood in which the Allen's live has been affected by the presence of youth gangs on the street and a corresponding rise in the level of vandalism and violence in the area.

It is apparent from the diagram that Richard's problem, if it can be even labeled that, is not his alone. He is both acting upon and reacting to forces within the social environment. The problem-to-be-worked is not one but many, all of which are embedded within several social systems within the community. The social

unit diagram is helpful towards discerning which are the important social systems involved in the difficulty at hand and where the points for effective intervention lie.

A system is a network of relationships. From the perspective of pastoral care a system of relationships might include a person's relationship with God and with the community of the Christian Church. A pastoral counselor will be aware that relationships can be both horizontal and vertical, between person-to-person and person-to-God. Looking at a problem situation in theological perspective, one would never exclude God's activity in the world in the presence of Jesus Christ as the major point of departure for understanding human behavior within the context of systems. Only a theological perspective can give the helper full appreciation of the limits as well as the possibilities, within every social system, for genuine change.

#### Force-Field Analysis

A second part of pastoral diagnosis is force-field analysis. Every person-in-situation is a force-field, some forces working towards change, other forces resisting change, the status quo being the point where the forces of resistance equal the forces of constructive or destructive change. The status quo of every situation is structured by invested interests: economic, political, interpersonal, psychic, and change is most threatening when it affects areas of investment. Thus we experience

change, even change for good, with a certain amount of ambiguity. It is difficult to give up established patterns of behavior and methods of communication even when we know them to be destructive of ourselves and others. Karl Menninger writes in Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique

the patient seems to suffer simultaneously from a yearning to 'get well' and a compulsion to defend himself against any change in his life adjustment (especially the intrapsychic adjustment), uncomfortable though it may be in many respects....Now, like Hamlet, he begins to wonder whether it is better to suffer the familiar pains and aches associated with these old methods or to face the dangerous possibilities of a new and perhaps better way of handling himself. He knows that probably what he fears in the new situation is less dangerous than he supposes, and the rewards better than he imagines. He knows (i.e., reasons) that his fear is probably based on misapprehensions. Nevertheless, the fear is there, the doubt is there, the hesitation is there. And they remain for a long time.<sup>7</sup>

#### A Practical Illustration (2)

David Smith is an attractive and intelligent adult in his mid-thirties with a college education and a graduate degree in business administration. In the past six years David has been unable to hold a job for longer than a period of two months and has lost over 12 different positions from the lack of an ability to concentrate, to follow directions, to remain attentive, and to perform consistently and competently on any project assigned to him. He maintains that each job was beneath his skills and intelligence. Yet he hates to be unemployed and has

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<sup>7</sup>Karl Menninger, Theory of Psychoanalytic Technique (New York, Harper and Row Publishers, 1964), p. 101.

never be able to find a job which he has felt to be adequate for his own abilities. Now, forced to remain home for long periods of time, alone, he has entered into long periods of depression. Sometimes he wanders aimlessly up and down city streets, often in front of a building where he was previously employed, with strong feelings that he has been rejected by everyone in the professional world. Recently he was hired by the Y.M.C.A. as a program developer but was fired after 4 weeks for lack of initiative and interest in the job.

David came to the city from a small midwestern town in Iowa. His father was president of the local bank -- a powerful, authoritarian, and imposing figure, very much a prominent personality in town affairs. David, an only child, admits that he has always been very dependent on his parents for financial help and interpersonal security and that he has had a difficult time resisting their intervention into problems that he should have learned to resolve on his own. When David did decide to leave home, he came to a large city on the East Coast where he met a Spanish-American girl named Elsie and soon after they decided to get married, despite strong opposition from David's parents. David's family did, finally, decide to come to the wedding but as Elsie's family could only speak Spanish it was a strained and very confusing affair.

Since the marriage, David has become close to members of Elsie's close-knit and extended family, especially to



her mother and father. His closeness to the Vasquez family has further estranged him from his own parents, although he still feels dependent upon them for financial support. Because David has been unable to hold a job, Elsie has decided to work and has found a high paying job as a secretary in a large downtown corporation. Elsie's job has been a source of pride and pain for David; pride in that it has given her confidence in her abilities to interact in the world, despite the difficulties she has speaking English; but pain in that Elsie's success has contrasted with his own failure to find gainful employment.

Both Elsie and David attend First Congregational Church and are friends with the minister and his family. David has a number of close friends at the Church and the community has become a supportive one for him. He serves as an active member of the Diaconate and the Board of Trustees and feels that the Church is a place where his work is needed. He and Elsie attend a Friday evening Koinonia Group at the Church and the group has given David the opportunity to discuss many of the existential and theological questions that have been of concern. David says that he doesn't believe in the God he was told about in Sunday school, but he does believe in a power in the universe, greater than himself, that can help strengthen him towards resolving the problems he faces.

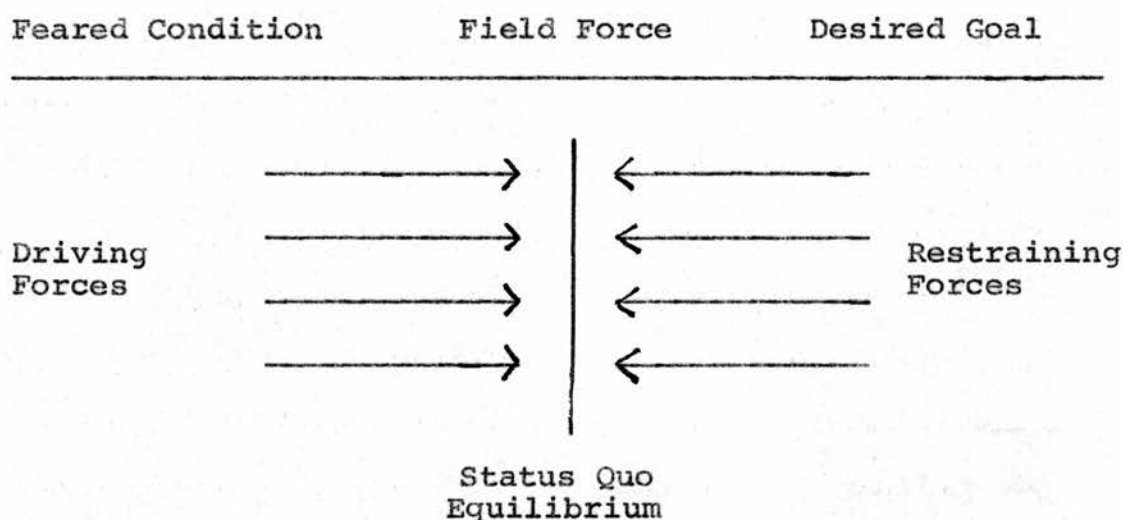
When David was fired from his job at the Y.M.C.A.

he felt humiliated, helpless, and impotent. Again he was unemployed and he hated being alone and isolated day after day. He told Elsie that he had lost his job and when she started crying he hit her and injured her face. That evening he attempted suicide, stabbing himself in the stomach with a long carving knife. The next day, after his wound was attended to in the hospital, he called the pastor at First Congregational Church for help.

Where would the pastor of First Church want to focus attention in dealing with this problem situation? When the pastor met with David they would both want to come to some understanding of the major forces involved in the problem; in other words, they would want to engage in force-field-analysis. The pastor's job would be to help David to identify the forces in his situation which are working in a positive fashion towards the achievement of his desired goal. Then, they would both want to identify the forces which obstruct the possibility for change -- those forces resistant to ameliorative actions. Every person-in-situation is an interacting field of forces, some positive, some negative; some which aid change, others which are resistant to any alteration of the status quo. The pastor would need to remind David that change can only occur by either increasing the strength of the driving forces (those forces working for ameliorative change), or decreasing the strength of the restraining forces, or some combination of the two such as converting a restraining force to a driving one. The focus of concern,

however, would always be on the concrete forces which are either blocking or enabling the achievement of a desired goal.

Diagram (3)



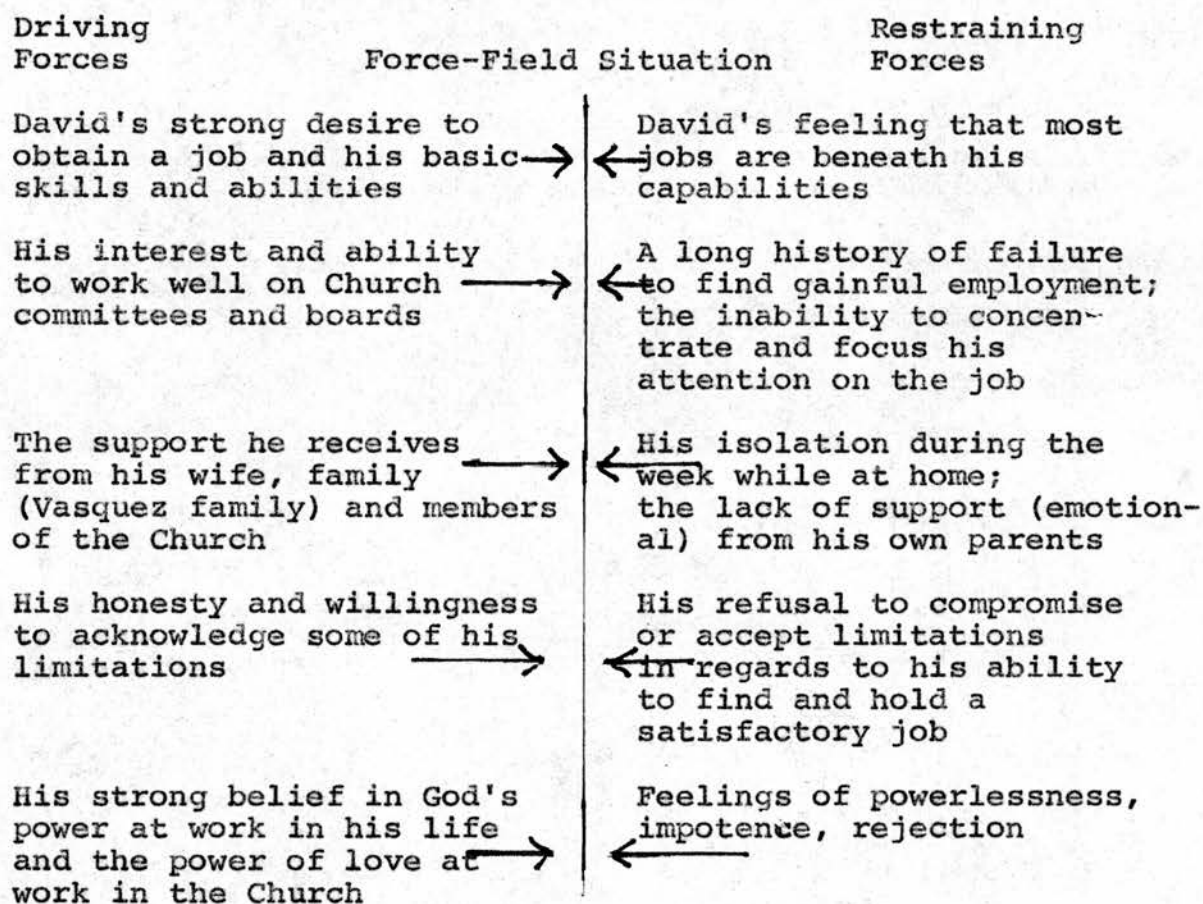
One major benefit of force-field analysis is that it enables a person or a group of persons to see that every situation is open with possibilities; that there are constructive forces which we can build on as well as destructive forces needing to be transformed. This insight helps to lessen the feelings of fatality that overwhelm persons in a problem situation where the negative forces often appear overwhelming and unchangeable. The underlying assumption of force-field analysis is that no situation is "closed," that there are always forces working toward change which can be channelled towards the fulfillment of a desired goal. Arnold

Toynbee once wrote,

Human affairs will never freeze, they will always stew, and the sure effect of putting the lid on them is to make them boil over...Attempts to freeze a situation are apt to have the opposite effect to what is intended. So far from being sedative, they are explosive.<sup>8</sup>

A force-field analysis of David Smith's problem might look as follows:

Diagram (4)



#### Diagnosis in Theological Perspective

Diagnosis, in pastoral care, is the process of gaining insight into the significant systems in which

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<sup>8</sup>Arnold Toynbee, "How to Change the World Without War," Saturday Review (May 12, 1912), pp. 19-20.

the problem is embedded and the significant forces which impinge upon the problem situation.. Because pastoral care is undertaken in the context of the Church, the Christian community, itself, can either help or hinder the caring process. In the case of David Smith, the Church and its activities functioned as a kind of "therapeutic community" for him, and served as a network of support during the times when he was working-through problems. One notes also that David's faith in God was clearly an important driving force in his life.

Pastoral care, as a diagnostic process, seeks to understand the dynamics of "systems" and "forces" in both sociological and theological perspective. Both perspectives are essential if the helper is to comprehend the full limits as well as possibilities for change within a problem situation. The concepts of "system" and "force" are important theoretical constructs that interrelate sociology with theology. When theology speaks about God's activity in the world it refers to a field of force, although a field qualitatively different from what the sociologist would identify. Also, when the theologian uses the concepts of "church" and "world" he is speaking about "systems" although, again, in a way qualitatively different from sociological analysis. The differences are discerned in the process



of correlating sociology with the theological perspective.<sup>9</sup> The important point here is that the "system" and the "field of force" are the pivotal places where these two perspectives will always intersect.

The sociological perspective helps us to understand the horizontal dimensions of human interaction and behavior. The theological perspective takes into consideration both the horizontal and the vertical dimensions of human life as they are revealed in the light of Jesus Christ. In the process of correlation, both perspectives help us to understand the systems and forces which are at work in the world, making and keeping human life fully human.

Diagnosis is a process of trying to understand the impact of these systems and forces upon human life. It is a way of clarifying the major obstacles and barriers which stand in the way of human fulfillment within the context of social relationships. Through diagnosis we begin to understand who we are, what we have become, and what we ought to do with our lives.

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<sup>9</sup>See Part IV, and, in particular, Chapter 12 for a full discussion of the correlation method.

PART III

THE PRACTICE THEORY OF PASTORAL CARE

## Introduction

Pastoral care is a comprehensive program of ministry sponsored by the church and aimed at solving problems that arise in person-to-person, person-in-group, and persons-in-community situations. A comprehensive program of pastoral ministry involves the flexible utilization of three general methods of pastoral intervention: casework, group work, and community work. Pastoral care as casework focuses on the individual as the primary unit of attention. As group work, pastoral care is directed to problems that develop out of the interpersonal dynamics of a group setting. Community work begins with the broadest unit of society, the community at large in which the church is located. Sometimes a church will rely on one method of care more than others, but over a long term all three methods will emerge as vital dimensions of pastoral care.

How does one practice pastoral care as casework, group work, and community work. How do these methods function in concrete situations and specific cases? What are the basic principles of problem-solving that are generic to all three approaches? What are the different forms of intervention within each particular approach? The following discussion focuses on these questions of "how" by providing a three-tier model for pastoral ministry with examples and case studies illustrating the skills and techniques involved in each respective method of intervention.

## Chapter 7

Pastoral Care with Individuals

Many individuals turn to the Christian Church in times of need. A nationwide survey conducted in America and published under the title of Americans View Their Mental Health asked the question, "Where do you go for help with a personal problem?"<sup>1</sup> The result showed that 42% of the people went to clergymen; 29% to doctors; 18% to psychiatrists or psychologists; 13% to social service agencies; 6% to lawyers; 3% to marriage guidance counselors; and 11% to others. There can be little doubt that churches are front-line caring communities for individuals with problems.

Every person reacts to a problem situation in his or her own individual way. Even when the problem is a typical one, e.g. alcoholism, divorce, etc., the particular circumstances of each problem will vary from individual to individual. Everyone responds in a unique way to human difficulty. Thus, there are good reasons why, during times of crisis, people seek individualized care and attention. Writes Father Biestek,

Individualization is the recognition and understanding of each client's unique qualities and the differential use of principles and methods in assisting each toward a better adjustment. Individualization is based upon the right of human beings to be individuals and to be treated not just as a human being but as this human being with his personal differences.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Gerald Gurin, Joseph Venoff, and Sheila Feld, Americans View Their Mental Health, Monograph Series No. 4 (New York, Basic Books, 1960), pp. 314-317.

<sup>2</sup>Felix P. Biestek, S.J., The Casework Relationship (London, George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1957), p. 25.

One method for working with individuals on a one-to-one basis is called casework.<sup>3</sup>

### Pastoral Care as Casework

The primary task of one-to-one pastoral care is to create an atmosphere of warmth, openness, and acceptance with the person needing help. A person needs to be encouraged to relax and feel free to express what the problem is from his or her own point of view. Only the person with the problem can say what it really feels like. The caseworker may want to ask an open-ended question such as "How do you feel?" or "How are you doing?" as a way of beginning the conversation.. More important than words, however is the caseworker's ability to demonstrate interest and concern. Writes Helen H. Perlman, "It is this demonstration of sympathetic attitudes and intent that, more than words, encourages

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<sup>3</sup>We will use the term "casework" to describe this method of pastoral care. Other terms might also have been used such as "counseling" or "helping," or "caring," The advantages of the term casework are two-fold: (1) casework implies a one-to-one, person-to-person approach to problem-solving, and (2) casework can be differentiated from group work and community work as a distinct methodological approach. The distinction is important in this thesis because of the working principle that pastoral care involves the use of all three methods: casework, group work, and community work. One criticism that is often made about the term "casework" is that it has lost its generic quality, and is now too closely associated with the professional practice of social work to be applicable to another caring discipline. In our view, the usefulness of the term for conceptualizing a three-fold approach to pastoral care, far outweighs the criticism; and we suggest that the term can be used in a generic way.



the client to begin to tell his troubles.<sup>4</sup>

A Practical Illustration (1)

Mrs. E. is a thirty-eight year old widow with a long history of emotional disturbances. Her husband has recently died and she is now having a great deal of trouble with her 15 year old son, Robert.

Mrs. E: I don't know what I am going to do with Robert.

Sometimes it seems he is deliberately trying to drive me into a nervous breakdown. All day I have to keep after him to get him to do things he is supposed to do. He has always been slow and careless, but now he seems to be getting worse. He even gets angry with me. What do you think he said this morning? I was trying to get him up and off for school and he said, "Shut up and leave me alone...leave me alone and I'll get along better."

Caseworker: I can understand how that would be upsetting to you.

Mrs. E: Oh, I feel so miserable about the whole thing. He could be such a help to me now. He is big enough to do many things with me and for me. But the more I need him the less I am able to depend on him. He seems to think only of himself.

Caseworker: You feel he thinks only of himself?

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<sup>4</sup>Helen H. Perlman, Social Casework: A Problem-solving Process (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 140.

Mrs. E: Yes. He spends money on foolish things when he knows he should be saving it for college. He takes the dog up to his room when he knows I don't want the dog upstairs. He stays up late studying when he knows I need to get to bed earlier now.... It seems that he wants to do only what pleases him and never what I feel he should do. That makes me miserable. It just seems we can't go on living under the same roof with things like they are.

Caseworker: You can't go on like this.

Mrs. E: And yet I couldn't think of sending him away to school or anything like that because I need him so much. He is all I have left. That is why it is so upsetting.<sup>5</sup>

Notice that the caseworker allows Mrs. E. plenty of time to speak and that he encourages her to express both positive and negative feelings about her son. Mrs. E. has been under a great deal of tension and strain. She needs to get these feelings "off her chest" and ventilate the negative emotions. The opportunity to express these feelings, at the initial stages of the helping session, appears to have given her considerable relief. If, after her first response, the caseworker had indicated disapproval at the way she spoke of her son, Mrs. E. would probably have felt rejected, become defensive, and withheld any further expression of

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<sup>5</sup>Newman S. Cryer, Jr., and John M. Vayhinger, Casebook in Pastoral Counseling (New York, Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 123.

feelings. The helper, however, has in effect said, "I can understand how you feel." By accepting these feelings he has created an atmosphere of warmth and support and has opened up the possibility of the formation of a trust relationship.

### Active Listening

Active listening is the sine qua non of good caring. The value of disciplined and attentive listening cannot be overstressed. Many human problems can be resolved simply and quickly if the helper merely takes time to listen to the person in distress. Listening is the ability to enter into the experiences of another person. Writes Evelyn Davison,

The way the worker listens can convey to the client that she is concerned, that she regards the matter under discussion as important, and that she understands, at least in part, what it means to him.<sup>6</sup>

Good listening is not just the ability to hear the words that are spoken but to hear beneath the surface of a conversation. Often, one speaks of being able to listen with "the third ear," the title of a book written by Theodor Reik in 1948. Reik was not trying to describe some anatomical abnormality; rather he was describing, in metaphor, the ability to listen in depth, beneath the surface, to the pain, agony, and cries of despair that are heard in the silences of words spoken; not just what is stated explicitly but whispered from the stillness

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<sup>6</sup>Evelyn Davison, Social Casework (London, Bailliere, Tindall, and Cassell, 1970), p. 53.

of the human soul. Says Reik,

The voice that speaks in him, speaks low, but he who listens with a third ear hears also what is expressed almost noiselessly, what is said pianissimo.<sup>7</sup>

Listening is not passive but an active process of seeking to catch the hidden signals which convey the feelings and emotions behind the presented problem. While some people might be surprised at hearing the term "listening" described as a skill, a good counselor knows that it is one of the most difficult skills one can acquire. For listening requires the full and undivided attention of the caseworker's whole being, which can only be given when one is relaxed and transparent to one's own feelings. Active listening involves the imaginative participation in another person's problem situation.

Positive, active listening is often difficult for ministers who have been trained to speak and give advice rather than sit in silence and listen. Disciplined listening may threaten a minister's conception of his own authority and ministerial role. Many ministers would be apt to feel that the pastor in the first illustration (Mrs. E.) was too non-directive; others would be uncomfortable and anxious while listening to the expression of negative feelings. But pastoral care cannot proceed constructively unless ministers understand the value of listening. Comments Paul Johnson,

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<sup>7</sup>Theodor Reik, Listening with the Third Ear: The Inner Experience of a Psychoanalyst (New York, Grove Press, 1948), p. 145.

When the pastor is preaching he aims to give the word, but when he is counseling he wants to receive the word. Listening is now a more urgent call for the counselor than speaking.<sup>8</sup>

### Acknowledgement and Reflection of Feelings

Every problem has an emotional dimension that must be recognized and acknowledged before a problem situation can be resolved. Even problems that require direct forms of material assistance for resolution, will often have a hidden emotional component. An inexperienced helper can easily move too quickly towards offering advice or problem-solving before enough time has been given for the expression and acceptance of feelings. Not only should feelings be openly expressed but they should be acknowledged and reflected by the helper if the problem is to be "worked through" during the helping process.

A helper reflects emotions by restating in his own words what he perceives to be the underlying "feeling tone" of a communication. Reflection is not the mere "parroting back" of comments; rather it is an articulation and reformulation of the helper's understanding of what he has heard from the person-with-a-problem. The feelings lie submerged below the surface of the content-level of conversation and the art of reflection works to bring these feelings to new levels of consciousness.

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<sup>8</sup>Paul Johnson, Person and Counselor (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1967), p. 111.



## A Practical Illustration (2)

Mrs. H: It helps to talk. We were discussing others but not getting down to me. I am still waiting for someone to listen to me....I am trying to get a new image of myself, and I do not like to dig up from the past what might soil this image. I busily try to forget. Now I try to think who I am, but it is painful.

Caseworker: We may fear the shadow we are hiding, and yet we need to know who we are.<sup>9</sup>

The caseworker has not simply repeated the words of Mrs. H. in parrot fashion; he has instead restated his preception of Mrs. H.'s feelings in his own words. Secondly, the helper has caught the ambiguities in Mrs. H.'s remarks. He could have focused merely on the positive aspects of her statements but he includes in his reflection the negative aspects of fear and pain that also accompany her attempts at self-discovery. Some helpers feel obliged to offer "unwarranted reassurance" with such remarks as "Don't worry, everything will be all right." These comments, however, only serve to deflect attention from the ambiguous nature of people's feelings, thereby making an integrated adjustment all the more difficult. In Illustration (1) the caseworker has also helped Mrs. E. to recognize the

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 123.

ambiguities in her feelings about her son, Robert, allowing her to acknowledge positive feelings about him as well as some negative feelings of resentment and hurt. By learning to accept these feelings both Mrs. E. and Mrs. H. can begin to accept themselves as persons with both positive and negative feelings that can be openly acknowledged.

### Focusing the Problem

A helping session will give a person the opportunity to bring the problem-to-be-worked into focus. When a slide projector gets overheated, the picture goes out of focus and requires that a projectionist turn the front lens back and forth until clarity is regained. A person in need of help will very often, likewise, be "overheated" from the pain and distress that has been encountered. The helper can serve as projectionist; one who turns the lens back and forth until a clearer perspective is gained about the problem situation and its complexities brought into focus.

### A Practical Illustration (3)

As Marilyn went out of church one Sunday she asked if she could see the pastor during the week. The pastor arranged for a time of meeting. When Marilyn arrived the pastor inquired, "Well, how have things been going?"  
Marilyn (M-1): Not so good.

Pastor (P-1): Something troubling you?

Marilyn (M-2): Well, it's over having the baby christened.

I know I signed those papers, but I wasn't a mother

then, and now I feel differently.

Pastor (P-2): You feel you would rather not have the baby baptised a Catholic.

Marilyn (M-3): Yes. I don't think I would mind so much but John never pays any attention to her, and I'm the one that has to get up at night with her, care for her, feed her -- in fact, do everything for her -- and it just doesn't seem right that she should be taken away from me into the Catholic religion.

Pastor (P-3): You wouldn't mind if he were more concerned about the baby.

Marilyn (M-4): Well, yes. But he is so insistent and dogmatic. Everyone is wrong but him. And if I ask him why he is right he says that doesn't matter; he is! His church means much more to him than his own family.

Pastor (P-4): And you feel the family -- you and the baby -- should come first.

Marilyn (M-5): Yes. (At this point Marilyn sat quietly for several minutes. It was difficult to talk with her. She did not express herself easily, and she was tense and keyed up.)

Pastor (P-5): Then you would not mind having the baby baptized if John showed more concern and affection for you and the baby and if he were a little more tolerant.

Marilyn (M-6): Probably not....<sup>10</sup>

Notice that the conversation begins with the problem of the baby's christening (M-2). This is often referred to as the "presented problem." Soon, however, the focus of the conversation shifts to the relationship between Marilyn's husband and the child. The pastor makes a good reflection in (P-3) helping Marilyn to see that the problem isn't so much the christening of the child as the lack of attention shown by the husband for the child. In other words, the loss of the child into the Catholic religion isn't so painful as the loss of the husband's care and concern for his child. But again the focus shifts to a more basic level when Marilyn reveals that the problem isn't just John's indifference to the baby but his indifference to her! (M-4). Again the pastor helps to clarify this point with his reflection in (P-4) which picks up on Marilyn's use of the word "family" and makes explicit her desire that both she and the baby should come first. Now the problem begins to center on the husband-wife relationship. The minister helps Marilyn to turn the "lens" back and forth on the various dimensions of her difficulty: the christening, the relationship between husband and child, and Marilyn's own relationship to her husband. In (P-5) the pastor

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<sup>10</sup>Cryer, op. cit. pp. 89-90.

draws the threads of the conversation together, in a way that provides focus to the original problem at hand.

### Working the Problem

Working the problem begins when the person-in-difficulty accepts responsibility for his or her problem and begins to do something constructive about it. No solution for a problem can be imposed upon a person or persons who are unwilling to help themselves. No matter how concerned and attentive a caseworker is in seeking to solve a problem, the initiative must always rest with those who are being helped towards taking the first steps for resolving a difficulty. The caseworker should say, "Let us work on this problem together" encouraging the persons involved to accept responsibility and accountability for coping with the issues presented.

Working the problem involves planning, decision-making, strategizing, and try-out actions. A person's ego capacity is like a muscle that needs to be exercised. The caseworker will ask the person-with-a-problem to assess the facts of the situation, explore new possibilities for constructive interaction, open different channels of communication, rehearse alternative courses of action, and initiate small steps for resolving the conflict. The basic assumption of problem-solving is that a person learns best by doing. One must learn to distinguish between the changeable and the unchangeable, and pray in the words of Reinhold Niebuhr,

God, grant me the serenity



To accept the things I cannot change  
 The courage to change the things I can  
 And the wisdom to know the difference.<sup>11</sup>

Working the problem means cutting it down to size. The dimensions of a problem may be complex and intertwined in a variety of social variables but no problem can be resolved unless it becomes manageable. A problem must be "workable" if it is to be solved, writes Helen Perlman,

Even with the general area of focus clarified, there are many situations in which the problem is of such complexity and magnitude as to need even further narrowing down if it is to be workable. This calls then for the carving-out of some part of the identified problem for intensive or first consideration.<sup>12</sup>

#### A Practical Illustration (4)

A caseworker has attempted to involve the members of a multiple problem family in problem-solving work of a specific nature in order to rebuild their relationships with one another. Rampant stealing is one of several problems the family has encountered. The caseworker focuses the discussion on this problem in the hopes that relief here will serve as a catalyst towards working on other, more difficult problems in the future.

Father (F-1): (to worker) Is this problem of stealing in our home worth working on?

Worker (W-1): It certainly is. It's the whole matter of being able to trust each other.

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<sup>11</sup>Reinhold Niebuhr, "For Serenity," in Michael Hollings and Etta Gullick, eds., The One Who Listens: A Book of Prayer (New York, Morehouse-Barlow Co., Inc. 1971), p. 50.

<sup>12</sup>Perlman, op. cit., p. 147.

Mother (M-2): This is it; there really is a lack of trust in the family.

Julie (J-2): (to Carl) If something of yours is taken, do you know who's taken it? (Carl: No.) All right, and do you ever find out? (Carl: No.)

Mother (M-2): I can't leave money around the house. You've got to carry your purse around with you no matter where you go, or your cigarettes, anything valuable, you've got to lock up somewhere, And even the locks are picked....This is a terrible way to live.

Father (F-2): I never know whether Carl and Julie are telling me the truth.

Worker (W-3): (to all) What are some of your ideas as to why this problem exists in your family?

Tom (T-4): Whenever I saw something I wanted, I took it....

Worker (W-4): Do you think that's what it is?

Julie (J-4): I don't know. I just want it and I don't think about it until after it's done. I put my conscience aside.

Worker (W-5): How about you, Carl?

Carl (C-5): The same as her. I wanted it and I didn't think about it until after it was done. I just wanted it and I'd forget about what would happen if I got caught. Feelings about it started to bother me afterwards, but then it started to be a habit.

(later in the discussion)

Carl (C-6): I don't want to grow up to be a con artist.

But right now I really don't use my connery as much as I used to. If I try to work with my parents better and my brothers and my sisters better, no one will believe me. So how can anyone try and do something right when you have the reputation of being a con artist? You can't.

Worker (W-6): That's a real problem. Carl wants to change and win your confidence. How can he go about it? How can he overcome the reputation he's built up?

Julie (J-6): I think if he would be good for a long period of time, he would gain our trust back.

Father (F-6): We were asked if we can do anything about the stealing. If we decided that it has to stop, then maybe we should all start putting things on the table and trust that it's going to be there. And start trusting each other all the way.

Carl (C-7): I'll never be trusted, so I may as well just keep going on.

Julie (J-7): We don't know when this trust will begin, and you guys just won't know unless we all try together.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>David Hollowitz, "Problem-solving Theory," in Francis J. Turner, ed., Social Work Treatment: Interlocking Approaches (London, The Free Press, 1974), pp. 118-119.

Illustration (4) is an example of the problem-solving process at work in a family situation. First, the worker reaches an agreement with the family that the problem of stealing is worth working on. While there are many other serious problems involved, the problem of stealing is one that is manageable and one that can be tackled constructively. The worker is then able to help each member of the family to explore the consequences of his or her own behavior. Julie's remark to Carl (J-2) points out the self-defeating nature of rampant theft. The worker helps each child to see the short-sightedness of their own collective actions, and the failure by all the members of the family to establish mutually need-satisfying relationships (W-3). Following a general exploration, the worker asks specifically what Carl can do about his problem (W-6). Carl wants to change but how can he go about it? Julie offers one possible course of action (J-6). Father makes a general suggestion (F-6). Each suggestion represents a small beginning towards the reconstruction of family relationships. It begins to become obvious that all would gain if the problem of stealing could be resolved. Working on this problem is one step in the larger task of reorienting destructive relationships that have been established over a period of years. By learning to cope with one problem, there is a chance that new energies will be released for new patterns of adaptation, thereby checking the downward cycle of negative interaction. The worker helps the

family to help itself to make a small initiative in reordering interaction patterns.

#### A Practical Illustration (5)

Mrs. R. was a 78 year old widow who lived in a run-down slum tenement area of a large industrial city. She had been offered a new council house by the city corporation but didn't want to leave the neighborhood in which she had lived for over 60 years. She had no family. Her apartment was so rat-infested and structurally unsafe as to make it imperative that she move. A social worker visited Mrs. R. to persuade her to accept a new council flat. Mrs. R. refused saying that she didn't want to leave her church that was located in that community. The social worker contacted the minister of Mrs. R.'s church to see if he could help. The minister arranged to have a member of the church drive Mrs. R. to see her new council apartment but two days later she again refused to move. She told the minister what she had told the social worker; that she didn't want to leave her church. During the following weeks the minister paid several household calls on Mrs. R. During each visit he spoke with her about the feelings she had for the neighborhood, her fears of moving to a new housing estate, and her deep wish to die as a member of the church where she and her husband had been married. The minister explored with Mrs. R. several possible ways in which she could live in the new apartment and still maintain contact with the church.



It was suggested that another church member could drive Mrs. R. to church each Sunday and the minister assured her that he would continue to visit her on the new estate. These assurances "tipped the balance" and three weeks later she moved. After a period of time, the minister contacted his colleague, into whose parish Mrs. R. had now moved, to notify him of her presence in the area with the suggestion that he might gradually pay some home visits as well. These arrangements worked successfully and nine months later Mrs. R. asked for a letter of transfer into her new parish church. She said that she had "gotten to know some neighbors" and had decided to attend their church.

Illustration (5) is an example of a problem-solving approach which had initially failed because neither the social worker nor the minister took enough time to explore with Mrs. R. her feelings about the move. Attention was focused too quickly on the immediate task at hand without allowing Mrs. R. the opportunity to express her deep feelings about leaving the neighborhood in which she had lived for 60 years. The helpers had failed to involve Mrs. R. sufficiently in the problem-solving process, and she had not accepted responsibility for the problem at hand (the uninhabitable nature of her apartment). Only when the minister took time to sit down with her, helping her to clarify the issues and making alternative suggestions, did Mrs. R. begin to work on her own problem. Once having overcome

her initial fears of moving into a new housing estate she began to form new friendships and finally to establish a new relationship with the local community church.

### The Helping Relationship

It is the relationship that is established between the helper and the helped that is the essential element of one-to-one pastoral care. "Relationship" writes Evelyn Davison, "is perhaps the most important single factor in the promotion of personality growth."<sup>14</sup> Father Biestek begins his study of social casework by saying that "the relationship is the soul of casework."<sup>15</sup> Every other skill that is utilized in pastoral care can only be successful to the extent that a relationship of trust and care has first been established. The relationship itself is the primary environment in which healing, sustaining, and problem-solving takes place in casework. Writes Carroll Wise,

The relationship is the essential therapeutic element in pastoral counseling, as in all pastoral work. The emotional injuries for which people seek help have been created by faulty relationships with emotionally significant persons. The healing of these injuries will take place only through a healing relationship with another person.<sup>16</sup>

A pastoral relationship is one of trust, nurture, and understanding. The person seeking help needs to be

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<sup>14</sup>Davison, op. cit., p. 111.

<sup>15</sup>Biestek, op. cit., p. xiii.

<sup>16</sup>Carroll A. Wise, Pastoral Counseling: Its Theory and Practice (New York, Harper and Brother Publishers, 1951), p. 40.

able to trust that he or she will not be used or manipulated for the caseworker's own personal desires. He wants to have his problem kept confidential. He wants to be accepted and understood instead of judged, condemned, or sanctioned. He needs someone who will give him unconditional support in spite of his anger, guilt, forbidden impulses, fears, fantasies, and other negative feelings. He wants to enter into an I-Thou relationship with the helper in which there is honest dialogue between two human beings. Writes Paul Johnson,

It occurred to me then that counseling is, in fact, a duet of the spirit, in which the counselor is sustaining the person by his responsive spirit, upholding the melody of his speech, with the harmony of going forward together.<sup>17</sup>

Finally, it is important to note that the pastoral relationship does have certain aspects of a professional therapeutic relationship and to note the distinctions between relationships that are formed for purposes of pastoral care and our private personal relationships. Private relationships are for the mutual satisfaction of our own personal needs; needs of love, respect, recognition, and security. The caseworker, however, must not try to gratify his own personal needs through pastoral relationships. If the caseworker is using the helping relationship to satisfy egocentric desires of his own (recognizing of course that there is some egotism in all relationships), then the interaction process will become

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<sup>17</sup>Johnson, op. cit., p. 100.

destructive and counter-productive. A pastoral relationship must always focus on the needs of the person seeking help.

Second, the caring relationship is one of "controlled emotional involvement."<sup>18</sup> As important as it is that the caseworker establish rapport and demonstrate unconditional positive regard, the relationship must still be limited and controlled. The caseworker participates in the relationship but at the same time maintains a degree of detachment necessary for perspective. He acts, in the words of Harry Stack Sullivan, as a "participant observer."<sup>19</sup> A good caseworker needs to be aware of the difference between empathy and over-involvement. The caring process is endangered when the helper becomes emotionally overinvolved in the problem. To refer back again to Illustration (1), had the caseworker over-identified with Mrs. E., and taken sides with her against her son, he would have only driven a further wedge between the relationship of mother and child instead of helping to reconcile them. Likewise, the caseworker might have had strong feelings that it was Mrs. E. who was trying to control and dominate her son,

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<sup>18</sup>Biestek, *op. cit.*, pp. 48-66. Biestek's discussion is helpful for understanding the nature, purpose and function of the casework relationship.

<sup>19</sup>Harry Stack Sullivan, *The Psychiatric Interview* (London, Tavistock Publications Limited, 1955), pp. 19-23.

which in turn might have reflected some of the caseworker's unconscious fears vis-à-vis his own mother. A good caseworker can only acknowledge and accept the feelings of others to the extent that he is transparent to the ambiguities and complexities of his own feelings. Pastoral care is a means to an end; that of helping a person with a problem to remove all the barriers which stand in the way of being able to create I-Thou relationships with all those people in one's immediate community; so that from that time forth, a person can be sustained and supported by the informal on-going relationships of everyday life.

#### Basic Types of Casework Intervention

A crisis is a period of high tension, stress or disequilibrium during which a person's customary problem-solving skills fail to cope with the problem at hand.<sup>20</sup> The crisis may be either developmental or accidental. Maturation crisis occurs throughout the various phases of the individual's life cycle. Birth, marriage, parenthood, death are all periods of time that generate emotional strain and stress. Accidental crisis is always unanticipated. The loss of a job, a home, or a child; an unwanted pregnancy, a terminal illness,

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<sup>20</sup>The following books are excellent sources for understanding crisis counseling: Gerald Caplan, Principles of Preventive Psychiatry (New York, Basic Books, Inc., 1964), pp. 25-55; Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling (New York, Abingdon Press, 1966), pp. 157-175; and Howard J. Parad, ed., Crisis Intervention: Selected Readings (New York, Family Service Association, 1958).



a natural disaster are all examples of unexpected crises. In each situation, however, a person may find that he cannot cope or mobilize energies for alleviating the mounting tensions that are suddenly experienced.

The aim of crisis intervention is to help a person pull out of his "emotional tailspin" before becoming the victim of a self-defeating cycle of destructive behavior. During periods of crisis, an individual is often very responsive to the positive influence of an outside agent. A quick and decisive intervention may tip the balance of forces in a constructive direction. Naomi Golan writes,

A minimal force can produce a maximal effect; a small amount of focussed help appropriately given at the right time may be more effective than more extensive help when the person is less open to change.<sup>21</sup>

One crisis area, of particular concern to ministers, is that of bereavement. Death is a central crisis to the life of every family. Here the minister's role is clearly defined and he has an important responsibility to help the bereaved to "work through" the powerful feelings and emotions that accompany the loss of a loved one. Eric Lindemann calls this form of care "grief work" and stresses the importance of helping each individual work towards healing the wounds of death.<sup>22</sup> A minister

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<sup>21</sup>Naomi Golan, "Crisis Theory," in Turner, Social Work Treatment, op. cit., pp. 421-422.

<sup>22</sup>Clinebell, op. cit., pp. 167-172. An excellent discussion of counseling with the bereaved and reference to Eric Lindemann's work in 1943 after the Coconut Grove fire.

can help a person to release pent-up feelings of sorrow and distress, invite conversation and reflection about the life of the deceased so that a person, gradually, is able to accept the loss with a willingness to enter into new relationships. A crisis is a critical turning point in an individual's life; a turning point that can also become a "cross roads"; a time when an individual discovers, perhaps for the first time, the sources of inner strength which come from encountering the cross of Jesus Christ and the power of His love.

Long-term supportive care is needed for individuals who cannot be expected to alter their behavior or modify their personalities, or transform their relationships within the "givenness" of the particular situation. The Christian Church has a responsibility to care for individuals who are permanently housebound with physical disabilities (blindness, paralysis); long term hospital patients; or families suffering under serious conditions of multiple deprivation. Many elderly need on-going, long-term relationships of support and care. These people cannot be expected to change their way of life a great deal, even when certain patterns of behavior are harmful to their own esteem and their relationships with others. Many elderly need help in reassessing the limits as well as the possibilities of their living situation; or again in Niebuhr's words "the serenity to accept the things that can't be changed but the courage to change

the things that can be changed." <sup>23</sup>

A long-term sustaining relationship is one that offers continual reassurance, encouragement, and inspiration. Regular visits and demonstrations of concern by the minister and church members are of vital importance here. Unlike the social work department or public health agencies, the Church is in a unique position to incorporate the individual into an on-going network of supportive relationships. Long-term residential confinement in our society can be one of the most dehumanizing experiences whether it takes place in a hospital, a nursing home, a psychiatric institution, or a prison. Even the four walls of one's apartment or home can become a prison for persons with no contact with the outside world. A housecall, a telephone call, a letter, a gift of flowers can become one of the most important ways of communicating care that individuals in a Church can perform for those confined by their living arrangements.

Referral counseling is the opportunity to initiate stop-gap procedures that will support a person in trouble while helping an individual to find the agency or person who can best help resolve the problem-situation. Referral counseling implies a team-approach for pastoral care; an approach which recognizes the value and usefulness of helping agencies in the community for Church people

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<sup>23</sup> See footnote No. 11.

as well as non-Church people who are encountering problems. Ministers, particularly, are in strategic positions to make referrals. Writes Howard Clinebell,

Since many people trust his judgment and turn to him spontaneously when trouble strikes, a minister is in a strategic position to assist them in finding competent, specialized help. A wise referral is one of the most significant services he can render a suffering parishioner.<sup>24</sup>

Referral counseling requires both extensive knowledge of community resources and the ability to use good counseling procedures.<sup>25</sup> The caseworker may wish to refer an alcoholic to Alcoholics Anonymous; a problem child to a child guidance clinic; a family seeking financial assistance to the social work department, or a person with acute symptoms of depression to a psychiatrist. A responsible helper not only has knowledge of the social services in the community but will have a personal-working-relationship with other helping practitioners in the community. Many persons have misconceptions and irrational fears about a particular helping agency which prevents them from seeking help where it could be most effectively given. Some people have misconceptions about A.A.; others about seeking any form of professional assistance when it might be needed. Because of these fears and misconceptions, referral counseling can be one of the most challenging

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<sup>24</sup>Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., Mental Health Through Christian Community (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1965), p. 228.

<sup>25</sup>Clinebell, Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, op. cit., pp. 176-188.

but important dimensions of good pastoral care.

A comprehensive program of pastoral ministry involves pastoral care to individuals because many human problems require individualized attention and service for resolution. The ability to form a "caring" relationship with the individual-seeking-help is the most important dimension of one-to-one interventions. Person-to-person casework is one distinct method of pastoral care (in contrast with group work and community work) and includes many different types of intervention (crisis, long-term, referral and others) depending upon the problems that are encountered in the course of ministry.



## Chapter 8

Pastoral Care with Groups

Contemporary churches are again rediscovering the vital role of small groups in the life and development of Christian fellowship. One must use the word "rediscover" because the Church began as a small group movement. At the time of Pentecost the disciples were together devoting themselves to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayers (Acts 2:42). The Book of Acts informs us that "all who believed were together and had all things in common" (Acts 2:44). Small group life within the context of the Church is "undergirded by a long tradition."<sup>1</sup> Throughout history the meaning of Christianity has been rediscovered, writes Yves Conger,

by being lived from below, in small groups that found the Church in her fullness through little Church cells, in whose constitution the religious subject was personally and communally active.<sup>2</sup>

A group is often loosely defined as an entity somewhat larger than a couple and smaller than a crowd. Strictly speaking, a group is composed of two or more persons existing in a state of psychic interaction, conscious of one another and of their mutual relationships. There is a general sense of sharing something in common:

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<sup>1</sup>Howard J. Clinebell, Jr., The People Dynamic: Changing Self and Society Through Growth Groups (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1972), p. 128.

<sup>2</sup>Yves M.J. Congar, Lay People in the Church (Westminster, Newman Press, 1959), p. 51.

a feeling, an event, a bond, when a group is constituted. A group is not just a gathering of individuals in one particular place. Passengers in a railway car traveling from Glasgow to Edinburgh are not, necessarily a group. But if the brakes of the train are applied suddenly, and the passengers are jolted; and if in the aftermath the people in the carriage start expressing their fear and surprise, then a group situation will quickly be created by the exchange. One will then be able to witness in the railway car the presence of the following: (1) a psychic interaction; (2) a shared concern; and (3) a network of relationships. Each passenger will contribute to the group process.

Group work is a method of helping individuals by the purposeful development of positive group relationships.<sup>3</sup> The group process itself is an important medium for the practice of pastoral care as a problem-solving ministry. Unlike casework, group work takes place in the context of the reciprocal relationships between group members. Group life by itself, however, is no panacea for healing; one only needs to watch children at play to realize that group experience can be both destructive and constructive.

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<sup>3</sup>The distinction between group work and community work is not clear cut. Community work involves group activities and group work can often become a springboard to community action. Group work tends to be restricted to group-centered aims, goals, and problems while community work tends not to focus on the group itself but problems in the community at large. It must be noted, however, that many theorists of social intervention discuss group work and community work interchangeably.

The task of the group worker, therefore, is to influence the general dynamics of the group in such a way that they are constructive, need-satisfying, and life-affirming. This is a difficult job and one that requires constant attention to the needs of individuals in the group and the group as a whole. Group work is thus always process-centered. Writes Wilson and Ryland,

Work with groups is carried on by many different auspices and for many different purposes. There are many different methods, but each of them has this in common: the worker performs his function through participation in the interacting process between individuals in a group.<sup>4</sup>

### Group Work Skills

An important skill of group work is the ability to create a general atmosphere of warmth and trust within the group. The group worker must be able to help each member to accept, support, and trust the others. Whereas in one-to-one counseling the worker has a professional responsibility to show concern, respect and positive regard to the individual client, the members of a group face each other as equals with no professional obligation to help or to be of any assistance. The actions of the worker, therefore, must serve as a model to the group members. It is the worker's ability to relate warmly, to tolerate frustration, to accept hostility and rebuff, and to demonstrate understanding that will set the overall tone of the group interaction process.

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<sup>4</sup>Gertrude Wilson and Gladys Ryland, Social Group Work Practice (Cambridge, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1949), p. 60.

## A Practical Illustration (1)

(A church activity leader working with a group of senior citizens)

Mrs. Harold asked me very abruptly whether I could tell them now what they were going to do next week. As I looked at her inquiringly, she amended her questions and asked if I had any suggestions for them next week. I asked what they might like to do or had been thinking about doing. Mrs. Harold replied that they weren't quite sure, but they did like to do things with their hands; they "sure were a hand-working group." Mrs. Henderson laughed and said, "We don't know very much but we certainly want to learn a lot." I said perhaps we might use this coming week's meeting to try several things and see what we liked best. Everyone nodded eagerly. Mrs. Harold said she bet I knew how to crochet and knit and all that; she thought I looked like I could. I shook my head and said I didn't know how to crochet, but didn't she? She said she could crochet anything in the world. That was the only thing she did know how to do. I said perhaps she could teach me how. I added that perhaps we could all learn from each other.<sup>5</sup>

One notes in this exchange that Mrs. Harold is resentful of the worker's presence in the group. At the beginning of the encounter Mrs. Harold "bait" the

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., pp. 495-496.

worker to see if she plans to take charge of the group. Later, Mrs. Harold makes a derisive remark about the worker's looking the type that could "crochet and knit and all that." The group worker must be able to demonstrate to the members that she can accept the underlying hostility in these remarks with toleration but without intimidation. Here, the worker is able to recognize that beneath Mrs. Harold's hostility is a human cry for recognition and respect. She answers not with a counter-rebuff, that would only heighten tension, but instead by focusing on the positive contributions that Mrs. Harold could make to the life of the group. The worker begins to develop group trust by demonstrating her own ability to be accepting and yet firm with each individual member.

The group worker will seek to foster group-centered interaction. Individuals must be helped to become part of the group effort and to contribute according to his or her own level of ability. The worker accepts that some people will not want to participate as much as others and will make adjustments accordingly. It is important that people feel free to express their emotions, to bring their conflicts out into the open, and that they listen attentively to each other's concerns. During the session the group worker will try to be aware of the needs of each separate individual. Particular attention will be shown to the isolates -- those who don't form relationships, the bullies -- those who



persecute others, the dependents -- those who cling to the leader for security.

#### A Practical Illustration (2)

(A young-wives meeting at the Church)

In a group discussion, Mrs. A. described how she had never felt comfortable in a group. She had always belonged to some -- "I could not just be by myself all the time" -- but she could not remember that she ever talked to anyone or that anyone talked to her. She had always pretended she was quite busy when she was in those groups, she had helped in the kitchen at parties or had done just what the others did, but nobody seemed to see her and nobody ever met her outside the group. She always felt like crying. One of the members asked, "Why did you not start talking?" "I could not," said Mrs. A. "Why the heck did you come back?" said another. "I was afraid to be alone, and sometimes I thought I was just imagining all this, and everything really was all right...."<sup>6</sup>

An important aspect of group communication is the universalization of a problem. All too often individuals will feel that they are the only ones who live and suffer with difficulties. Group communication helps to reduce this sense of isolation and the feelings of shame and inadequacy. The individual is able to learn for himself,

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<sup>6</sup> Gisela Konopka, Social Group Work: A Helping Process (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), pp. 56-57.

first hand, that many of the problems which he faces are shared equally by others. A group member may comment, "It helps so much to hear what someone else has lived through. I thought I was the only one who had problems."

The worker helps the group to face problems and conflicts that impede individual growth within the group. All groups develop patterns of opposition and accommodation. Conflicts within a group situation are inevitable because people have different levels of need and bring to the group different wishes and desires. One only avoids conflict by avoiding people. Thus, the group must be helped to recognize and resolve tensions in the interaction process. Some problems develop because communication between members is distorted or misleading. Other problems arise out of the struggle for leadership; a power struggle inherent within all social dynamics. A group may become imbalanced as individuals band together in dyads or triads to exclude or eliminate others with different interests. A common phenomena in group life is what psychologists call "scapegoating." One particular member of the group will be rejected by others with an unusual degree of hostility being manifested. When one examines the reasons for the rejection, however, one usually finds that beneath the surface of the comments by the scapegoaters are the unresolved and unrecognized characteristics of their own lives which have unconsciously been projected onto

the outsider.

### A Practical Illustration (3)

(Church Youth Club)

At the beginning of an evening meeting the worker noticed that Carol was absent from the group. She heard some of the girls gossiping about Carol and telling cruel jokes at her expense. One said that she was "over-sexed" and another said that she didn't like the boys that Carol associated with at school. As similar discussions had occurred previously, the group worker suggested that the girls might like to talk about group "scapegoats" during the evening session. The girls responded. They discussed ways in which people of different religions, races, and creeds had been "scapegoated" in past history. The worker asked if perhaps Jesus himself had not been a "scapegoat" for the Scribes, Pharisees, and rulers of Israel. The girls became more thoughtful. Finally, the worker asked if this kind of experience had ever happened in the youth club. Without mentioning any names, the girls admitted that it was all too easy to turn a person into a scapegoat. The meeting closed with a prayer in which the worker prayed that God forgive all those who were involved in cruelty to others and mercy for those who had been made into scapegoats.

The group worker enables each members to participate constructively in the problem-solving process. At best,

each member is given the opportunity to experience satisfactory ways of working through a conflict that is encountered. The "working through" process may involve alleviating heightened tensions; the constructive channeling of hostility into useful outlets; or helping the group to arrive at a democratic decision. The key here is the opportunity for concrete experience. In contrast to one-to-one counseling, group work provides an environment for experiencing and living through interpersonal conflict, at first hand. Such an opportunity isn't possible in individual counseling where a client must learn to transfer the insights gained (in a relatively safe and protected environment) to the outside world of social encounter. In the context of group life, people are able to develop problem-solving skills on-the-spot.

One useful technique available to group workers is that of role-playing. Here, conflict can be worked through as it is acted out in dramatic setting. The technique provides group members with the opportunity for taking on different roles and thereby seeing their own particular problem from someone else's point of view.

#### A Practical Illustration (4)

(A church summer camp)

There was much conflict between this group of teenagers and their parents. The girls resented their parents' demands to conform to standards, and the parents considered the girls unreasonable. The group worker

suggested to the girls a meeting where both the teenagers and the parents were present.

A stage was improvised and the girls were asked to present in a play the way they felt their parents were treating them while the parents sat in the audience. Lucy and Carla presented very stern parents who were nagging them continually. They presented the mothers asking too many questions when a girl returned from a date. The girls were very reluctant to answer.

After the girls had finished their presentation the parents were asked to go on the stage and present their version of the situation. This time the girls were in the audience and saw their fathers and mothers presenting teen-agers who were sullen and uncommunicative even when they suggested something kindly. They saw their fathers nervously pacing the floor when the clock had struck one in the morning and they had promised to be home by 11 o'clock. During the two presentations there was much laughter because of the amusing way in which the roles were presented. After this there was a serious discussion. Out of this meeting came a better understanding and some agreement between children and parents.<sup>7</sup>

"The most challenging new element in the group situation" writes Nicholas Hobbs, "is the possibility of

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<sup>7</sup>Gisela Konopka, "The Method of Social Group Work," in Walter A. Friedlander, ed., Concepts and Methods of Social Work (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1958), p. 190.



releasing the therapeutic potential of the group itself."<sup>8</sup> The real success of a group worker is his ability to help group members themselves to be healing-agents. In a group situation, members can reach out to each other; they can give help as well as receive it. The group worker must act as a catalyst and enabler so as to create opportunities whereby members can help each other to work through problem situations. Over a period of time, the entire group can become the instrument of growth. Here is an important advantage that group work has over individual counseling, for the group members themselves can learn to provide support, acceptance, and care for others in need. The group can assume responsibility for its own members. Mutual help and shared responsibility is a real factor in group work that is simply not possible in personal counseling. The task of the good group worker is to continually see that the burden of responsibility is placed on the shoulders of the group. Writes Hobbs,

If the therapist is skillful, the group itself becomes a therapeutic agent and gathers momentum of its own, with therapeutic consequences clearly greater than would result from the efforts of the therapist alone.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup>Nicholas Hobbs, "Group Centered Psychotherapy," in Carl Rogers, ed., Client-Centered Therapy (London, Constable and Company, Limited, 1973), p. 305.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 305.

## A Practical Illustration (5)

(Church youth group)

George said he wished he could have more poise. He always feels like an outsider wherever he goes and has never really belonged in any group. Sue asked whether he felt part of this one. He said he thought he did belong since everyone asked where he had been if he missed a meeting. But he wanted to tell them something today. For a long time, the group members had been going to a coffee shop after meetings. Recently, he had started going with them, but he never ordered anything. Last week one of them offered to buy him some coffee. He wanted them to know that he has the money and could order coffee, but he is always anxious that he is too clumsy and will spill it.

Janet said, "You sound like me. I'm always spilling things." Ernest said, "Come on along today. If you spill coffee, I'll knock over the nearest chair and nobody will ever notice you." Everybody including George, laughed. Later George joined the group in the coffee shop.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Konopka, Social Group Work, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

## Types of Groups in the Church: Supportive-Inspirational Groups<sup>11</sup>

Worship is the "life-blood" of the Church. It is a centering-experience in which individuals are brought together as a corporate group to share in common fellowship. It is a time for recollection and renewal and for discovering the forgiving love of God. In the act of worship, people have the opportunity to break out of their isolation and self-enclosure and to affirm the unity of all creation. Worship is celebration that the "brokenness" of human relationships has been transcended in the love of Jesus Christ.

In Christian worship, we are reidentified as those who live in the hope that is grounded in God's victory in Jesus Christ. We are reconciled into relationship with God and with one another as members of the body of Christ that is the Church.<sup>12</sup>

There is a time for formal and informal worship in the life of every congregation. Supportive-inspirational groups provide ways in which Christians can participate in informal worship throughout the week. These groups are usually small, flexible, and organized around a varied program of hymn singing, Scripture reading, and

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<sup>11</sup>In Basic Types of Pastoral Counseling, Howard Clinebell lists five types of groups: (1) work and service, (2) study, (3) supportive-inspirational, (4) counseling, and (5) psychotherapy groups. The typology presented here is a revision of Clinebell's list. Work-service groups will be discussed in Chapter 9 as an aspect of community work.

<sup>12</sup>H. Grady Hardin, Joseph D. Quillian, Jr., and James F. White, The Celebration of the Gospel (London, The Epworth Press, 1965), p. 22.

prayer. The groups are sometimes called Koinonia groups, Yokefellow groups, or spiritual growth groups. In each case the aim is to combine an experience of group fellowship with the informal act of worship. Such groups play an important and often unrecognized role in any church's program of pastoral care, particularly with older people in the community. One of the most successful groups is the afternoon session that includes hymn singing, a guest speaker, and time for a good hot cup of tea. The functions of worship and pastoral care can often be united. Notes an editorial in "Pastoral Psychology,

From time to time we need to be aware of the close relationship between pastoral care and worship.... For, however skilled and empathetic the counselor may be, he cannot in his own person reflect the caring and sharing community that epitomizes worship at its truest.<sup>13</sup>

#### A Practical Illustration (6)

##### (Evening Bible Study)

A small group of fifteen from Forsyth Memorial Church met on Sunday evening for a Bible study class. The meeting began with a selected reading from the Scriptures followed by silent prayer and reflection. Then, each person in the circle was given the opportunity to express his own thoughts and feelings about the passage under consideration. Each was encouraged to relate the passage to personal experiences of faith, doubt, and hope. The

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<sup>13</sup>Simon Doninger, Editorial, Pastoral Psychology, XXIII, 221 (February, 1972), p. 5.

passages served as a catalyst for helping people to discuss problems of deep concern. By going around the circle, everyone was given a chance to contribute to the discussions. The meeting closed with a prayer of intercession, at which time people could mention the names of friends whom they knew to be in need.

### Social-Recreational Groups

Recreation is an act of refreshment, relaxation, and restoration. Literally, the word recreation (re-creatus) means to create again or to create anew. Recreation is the creative act of restoring body, mind, and spirit. Social recreation is important in the life of every fellowship and churches have traditionally sponsored many types of social activity. The purpose of social recreation is to provide opportunities for people to "take part in" the life of the Church; to learn to get along with others, to develop physical, social, and intellectual skills, to find constructive outlets for anger, aggression or hurt; and to gain stimulation from creative encounter with others. It is a way of helping the whole community to experience a sense of shared adventure, enjoyment, and involvement. Recreation is physical, social, and spiritual re-creation before God.

The initial focus of social-recreational groups is the "program" itself. Program media may include dramatics, music, dancing, coffee mornings, bus trips, retreats, camping, and a host of other activities. A group worker must be careful to see that the programs are organized



to meet the needs of the people involved. Often a program can be specifically "geared" to meet specific problems. For example, selection of volunteers for a coffee-morning may be used as a way of trying to include people who have been excluded from other functions in the church. Thus, it is important to recognize that social-recreational groups have two important dimensions that must be attended to: (a) the program itself, and (b) the inter-personal relationships and human needs that accompany each activity. In a speech to a gathering of group workers, Grace Coyle, has made this point.

Group work arose out of an increasing awareness that in the recreation-education activities which went on in groups there were obviously two dimensions -- the stream of activity -- games, discussion on the one hand and on the other the interplay of personalities that create the group process. To concentrate on one, for example, the activity, without recognizing and dealing with the other, is like playing the piano with one hand only. Program and relationship are inextricably intertwined.<sup>14</sup>

#### A Practical Illustration (7)

##### (The Kent Street Playgroup)

There was widespread recognition by mothers at the Kent Street Congregational Church of the need for a pre-school playgroup for children. The Church agreed to make its facilities available on weekday mornings (as the building was unused at that time anyway). The mothers were encouraged to include children from

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<sup>14</sup>Grace Coyle, "Group Work as a Method in Recreation," in Harleigh B. Trecker, ed., Group Work: Foundations and Frontiers (New York, Whiteside Inc., and William Morrow and Company, 1955), p. 93.

immigrant families as there was a large Indian and Pakistani community nearby. The playgroup gave the children a chance to learn new games and to participate in art, drama, and music activities. It was soon discovered, however, that many of the mothers of the children had some unexpressed needs of their own. Some of the mothers were alone at home all day and had little communication with their neighbors; they were lonely, bored, and in search of companionship. "Why not start a group for mothers as well!" was the suggestion. Meetings were held and the mothers were given a room adjacent to the playgroup which they turned into a coffee lounge. After bringing their children to playgroup, the mothers met themselves to organize program activities. They started a drama workshop and six months later were able to produce a play for the whole church. Here the church was able to meet the needs of several groups in the community (mothers, children, and immigrants) through the medium of social-recreational groups.

#### Study Groups

Study groups play an important role in distributing information, knowledge, and skills about significant personal, family, or social problems that are faced by people in the community. Such groups can help people to explore new ideas, to share their common concerns, and to learn about social services available to them in the neighborhood. One function of the Church is to be a classroom for adults, much in the same way

that schools serve the educational needs of children. Adults, also, need to learn, particularly in the vital areas of child rearing, interpersonal family relationships, and preventive mental health. Study groups can be a medium for prevention and a forum for discussing general problems of community mental health. Study groups (like social-recreational groups) serve two purposes at the same time: (1) to foster knowledge and insight, and (2) to improve human relationships both inside and outside the group.

The leader of an educational group has three tasks. First, he must provide background information for the group, e.g. reading lists, pamphlets, topic headings, resource personnel. Second, he must help to introduce topics of concern, to encourage participation, to clarify issues, and to facilitate "self-discovery" learning. Finally, he must help to demonstrate how the information is relevant, where it can be best used, and general methods of application. All of these actions are aspects of what Clebsch and Jaekle call "guiding ministry". They write,

Fundamentally, the guiding ministry assumes that useful wisdom, which edifies and illuminates the meaning and direction of a person's life, can be made available within the framework of the helping act....The wisdom must be fashioned or shaped to the immediate circumstances of the troubled person in order that it may be appropriated and used in the context of the particular trouble at hand.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>15</sup>William A. Clebsch and Charles R. Jaekle, Pastoral Care in Historical Perspective (Englewood Cliffs, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1964), p. 50.

One way of organizing a program of "education-study" in the church is to adapt the program to the major needs of the human life cycle. Such an approach (based on Eric Erikson's 8 stages of human growth and development) has been suggested by Howard Clinebell in The People Dynamic which he calls "groups through the life cycle".<sup>16</sup> A brief but modified outline of this approach is presented below. These groups can serve either study or recreational purposes.

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<sup>16</sup>See Howard Clinebell, The People Dynamic, op. cit., pp. 138-143.

## Educational-Study Group Diagram (1)

<u>Stages</u>	<u>Groups for People at this Stage</u>	<u>Groups for Significant Others</u>
Stage 1: <u>Infancy</u> birth-15 months  Focus: child-birth, parent-child relationships		pre-baptismal study groups, expectant parenthood classes, natural child birth classes
Stage 2: <u>Early Childhood</u> 15 months - 2 1/2 years  Focus: creative play, child care	pre-school play groups	play group, training classes, classes in mother-care, parent support groups
Stage 3: <u>Oedipal</u> 2 1/2-6 years  Focus: the family, family roles <i>outside the family</i>	pre-school play groups, head- start programs for culturally deprived children	family-growth groups, family weekends, retreats, camps, holidays, activities
Stage 4: <u>School Age</u> 6-12 years  Focus: skills and tools of learning relationships outside the family	clubs, camps, boy scouts, boys brigade, girls brigade	parent-teacher groups, parent support groups
Stage 5: <u>Adolescence</u> puberty-20 years  Focus: boy-girl relation- ships, identity, the family	Youth fellowships, study groups ethical issues such as sex, crime, drugs, alcohol, population control)	family retreats, study groups
Stage 6: <u>Young Adulthood</u>  Focus: marriage, job, profession, parenthood	single adult groups, groups, pre- marital counseling, divorce counseling, woman's liberation, social action groups	see groups for children stages 1-4
Stage 7: <u>Middle Age</u>  Focus: identity, self- fulfillment	study groups, (philosophy, theol- ogy, ethics), social action groups	see groups for stages 4,5,6,
Stage 8: <u>Old Age</u>  Focus: integrity, dignity	spiritual growth groups, supportive inspirational groups, social-recreational groups	see groups for stages 6,7 6,7



## Encounter Groups

The encounter group is a relatively new type of group experience in the life of the Church. Encounter groups do not set out to accomplish a specific task. There is no program, no planned agenda, no rules of procedure. Nor is any progress expected of the group; only that each member participate in the encounter. In other words the focus is on the group process itself and on the relationships that are formed during the group's life together. Encounter groups purposely eliminate the "work-tasks" and "work goals" commonly associated with group activity in order that the participants can specifically concentrate on the dynamics of group interaction. Attention is focused on the here and now of feelings" and "relationships".<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup>The encounter group movement has three primary sources, all dating back to the late 1940's following the Second World War. First, the work of W.R. Bion, the British psychiatrist at the Tavistock Clinic in London, extracts of which are recorded in his book, Experiences in Groups, 1961. Bion was the first to emphasize the importance of suspending the work-task in order to examine the basic underlying assumptions of group life. Second, the work of Kurt Lewin, founder and director of the Research Center for Group Dynamics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Lewin's teachings were incorporated into a training program for group leaders by the National Training Laboratories in America. Third, the work of Dr. Carl Rogers and his associates at the Counseling Center of the University of Chicago utilizing the methods called client-centered therapy for group work purposes.

## A Practical Illustration (8)

(An Encounter group)

John: (To Alma) As long as we're talking about things, might as well pick on you a little bit. You remind me of a butterfly. (Laughter))

Alma: Why is that? I mean how, I mean, why do you say a butterfly?

John: Well, to me a butterfly is a curious thing. It's a thing you can get up pretty close to, as you might say, as a new friend, but just about the time that you can get up to it and pet it or bring it in closer to you and look at it, it flits away.

Alma: (Laughs nervously.)

John: Y'know, it's gone, and until you wear it out, you know -- or wet it down until it's so tired it can't fly any more ---or else you teach it to trust you -- you can't get close enough to it to touch it or find out anything real about it, except from a distance. You remind me of a butterfly in that way. Something that possibly would be quite pretty to look at close up, but you can never get that close.<sup>18</sup>

One notices that the above discussion is not about some abstract idea or some problem outside the group but instead is focused on the here and now relationship that exists between John and Alma. The conversation is about the way John perceives Alma to be acting within the

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<sup>18</sup>Carl R. Rogers, Encounter Groups (London, Allen Lane, The Penguin Press, 1971), pp. 29-30.

context of the group itself. An atmosphere of trust has been created between group members which allows each to speak openly and directly about the other, face-to-face. There is the mutual freedom to express real feelings, both positive and negative. Alma is nervous and perhaps a bit hurt, but she trusts John and she trusts that this feedback will be helpful for her own self-understanding and for her relationship with him. The goal of such an exchange is not to maliciously attack a façade or break down a defense but is to reach out to others in honest dialogue. It is an attempt to accept and affirm one another in open sincerity. Such an encounter is often impossible in groups that are focused on a work-task or program activity, where people are too busy "getting the job done" to concentrate on "getting to know" the others. John and Alma face each other directly with only their "feelings" between them.

Encounter groups are usually composed of from 8-18 members. The group may meet once or twice a week although recently groups have been experimenting with twenty-four hour and forty-eight hour marathons. It is always recommended that encounter groups have a trained leader with counseling experience.

#### Family Group Therapy

No discussion of group life within the Church would be complete without some mention of the family as a group. The family has long been considered an important nucleus

around which Christian fellowship is created. Yet many forces in society are now eroding traditional patterns of relationship, and family life is undergoing traumatic changes. Some even question whether the family, as a social institution, will exist at all in the near future.

There has been a great deal of interest, inside and outside the Church, in a comparatively new approach to family problems called family group therapy. Of particular interest is the work being done at the Mental Research Institute in Palo Alto, California under the leadership of Don Jackson, M.D. and Virginia Satir, M.A., A.C.S.W. Here, the focus of therapeutic attention has been shifted from the individual patient to the family as a whole. Individuals with problems are interviewed and treated in the presence of their family, rather than in isolation. Therapy is oriented to the individual only as he exists as a part of a larger social interaction system. Writes Sanford Sherman,

Family therapy, in its conceptual framework, raises its clinical eye level one notch in the social organizational continuum, moving from the atomized level of individuals to the nuclear level of the family. Family therapy stakes out this level as of focal concern.<sup>19</sup>

The underlying assumption of family therapy is that what appears to be an individual problem is in fact a family problem and that the family should be treated

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<sup>19</sup>Sanford N. Sherman, "Family Therapy," in Francis J. Turner, ed., Social Work Treatment (New York, The Free Press, 1974), pp. 459-460.

as the client. The overt pain that is expressed by one member is really a symptom of covert pain experienced within the whole family. In other words, when one member of the family is in trouble, all are in trouble. The so-called "identified patient" is acting as a Geiger counter "registering" the harmful and destructive vibrations of family interaction. The symptoms are, in the words of Virginia Satir, "an S.O.S. about his parents' pain and the resulting family imbalance."<sup>20</sup> Satir goes on to say,

If one member of a family has pain which is exhibited in symptoms, all members will, to some degree, react to that pain. They cannot not react.<sup>21</sup>

The goal of family therapy is to change or modify harmful patterns of family interaction. The therapist will try to help the family to re-open new lines of communication. He will help members to be aware of their mutual and co-dependent roles and expectations. He will encourage them to be flexible and experimental; to try out different ways of interacting together. The therapist continually asks, "What can be done to help the whole family to experience more constructive, need-satisfying, and life-affirming relationships?" Most important, the therapist will attempt to stem the negative downward-spiral of harmful interaction so that members can begin to help themselves toward building new patterns of

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<sup>20</sup>Virginia Satir, Conjoint Family Therapy (Palo Alto, Science and Behavior Books, Inc., 1967), p. 2.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 35.



interaction within the total family unit.

#### A Practical Illustration (9)

(The Pope Family) The Pope's have four children, Gail, 22 years, Gary, 19 years, Lois, 12 years, and Tim, 5 years. Mr. Pope is the co-owner of a small industrial-parts business and Mrs. Pope is a housewife.)

Therapist: (T-1): Let's hear about the rest of you.

Gary has spoken. Now let's hear about the rest of you. 'Cause you're all here and you have something that you expect.

Mr. P. (P-1): Well, we hope that, ah, Gary can find his place with the rest of the family here.

Gary (G-1): (interrupting) Here's, here's part of the trouble already...

Therapist (T-2): Excuse me just a minute. I'm not finished. Ah, anything else?

Mr. P. (P-2): That was, ah, that was the main, ah, thing, to find the homogen-homogeneity that we, ah, that, ah, hoped for before, that, ah, existed before, and find some foundation for that now.

Therapist (T-3): O.K. Let's hear about the rest of you. (To Lois.) What about you? Since you're next to Dad?

(L-3): (Laughs.) I don't know. Well, I don't know, what was going ... (Gary talking in background.) Well, I don't know what to expect, really.

Gary (G-3): I think it's something new to us. We didn't really, well...

Therapist (T-4): (To Lois.) Well, why do you think you came?

Lois (L-4): 'Cause I'm part of the family.' (Laughing.)

Therapist (T-5): And if the family has a wish, you want to go along with it. (Pause.)

Therapist (T-6): What about you, Gail?

Gail (G-6): Well, I hope that we can work together to find a solution so that we can all become a real family again.

Therapist (T-7): All right. So what you were talking about -- you are aware that in some way Gary has been hurting, and you don't understand why; that there was a time when Gary didn't hurt and the family... (Gary interrupts.)

Gary (G-7): I don't understand. What do you mean by the word "hurt"?

Therapist (T-8): Hurt, Hurt.

Gary (G-8): Pain. Physical, mental, anguish?

Therapist (T-9): Mental, maybe physical, I don't know.

Gary (G-9): Are you saying that I am hurting?

Therapist (T-10): This is what I'm saying the family is saying. There was a time when you didn't hurt. I'm checking this out. And you want to now have a family in which things are again, where people aren't hurting.

Gary (G-10): You see, its...

Mrs. P. (P-10): (simultaneously.) I don't feel that,

we don't feel you have inflicted the hurt, Gary.  
 That isn't what we mean. We just mean that  
 whatever it is that... (Gary interrupts.)<sup>22</sup>

The family therapist seeks to create an atmosphere in which every member of the family will feel free to participate in the discussion (T - 1). This concern reflects the basic philosophy that the total family is the unit of therapeutic attention. One notices in the above transcript that the therapist is very firm in insisting that each person has a chance to speak without being interrupted (T-2). By allowing each person to express his views, opinions, and feelings, the family is encouraged to work as a group towards the resolution of its problems. The Pope family has both implicitly and explicitly labeled Gary as the "identified patient". It is Gary who is considered to be the sick one. He is the one who, according to Mr. Pope (P-1) must "find his place with the rest of the family," and the one who has disrupted the "homogeneity" of family life.(P-2). The job of the therapist, however, is to help the "labeled person" to feel that he is not unique, or alone, or in any way inherently defective. Gary needs this kind of attention and support from the therapist. Gradually, the therapist will begin to shift the focus

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<sup>22</sup>Virginia Satir, "A Family of Angels," in Jay Haley and Lynn Hoffman, eds., Techniques of Family Therapy (New York, Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1967), pp. 101-106. A therapeutic session conducted by Virginia Satir.

of attention away from Gary and onto the "shoulders" of the whole family. It is everyone in the family who "hurts," implies the therapist in (T-10). Not just Gary, but the whole family has this problem, the pain is felt and experienced by all. Such a remark, of course, is difficult for the Pope family to accept (notice how Mrs. P. [P-10] indirectly, almost unconsciously, attempts to shift the focus back again upon Gary). One might say that they have a vested interest in not accepting this observation for if the focus were to shift away from Gary, then they might have to face the fact that there are other sources of difficulty and conflict within the family; conflicts which they have been able to avoid as long as Gary could be labeled the "problem-carrier". If he is to blame, how could they be? But if he isn't to blame, then where is the cause? Perhaps Gary serves as a "lightning-rod" attracting electric currents from elsewhere and acting-out accordingly. It is this type of dynamic that is central in the practice of family group therapy where the therapist looks at the total gestalt of family interaction.

Many of the insights from family group therapy would suggest that, whether trained or untrained, the parish minister is in an extremely vital position to help the "whole family" in need. It is the minister, more than any other professional in the community, who comes into constant, everyday contact with families as a total social unit. This contact may arise out of church activities and programs or it may come as the

minister makes his customary round of home visits. Perhaps family group therapy will give to "home visiting" or the "pastoral call" the professional dignity and importance that has all too often been underestimated by ministers themselves. It is in the home visit that ministers sit down and interact with every member of the family, on their own home-ground. Here, he can witness for himself the importance of family dynamics as a total interactional gestalt. Also, the minister will make contact with families at each stage of the life-cycle, e.g. births, marriages, and deaths. He is able to view problems not only within the context of time; that is, over long periods of family growth and development. One might suggest that the insights of family group therapy have opened up a Pandora's box that will not easily be closed. For if one advocates the importance of "raising clinical eyes one notch in the social organizational continuum" are there not other notches that need to be considered as well; notches of which the parish minister may have a birds-eye view. The discussion about the context of healing still continues.

Group work can play a valuable role in the Church's program of pastoral care. Most churches are in a strategic position within the community to foster a wide variety of group activities. Pastoral care through small group fellowship is a way of involving a large number of people in the "caring" process both as helpers and as those who are helped. The latent possibilities



for pastoral group work are just beginning to be discovered.

Interaction in small groups is becoming a major pre-occupation of contemporary society. It seems to offer a solution to many of our inherited social, educational, and psychological problems, even to give promise of a new kind of society. Those concerned to improve the pastoral care of the Church have seen in the small group exciting possibilities for a new pattern of church life.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Forward in Contact, No. 21 (October, 1967), p. 1.

## Chapter 9

Pastoral Care to the Community

A comprehensive program of pastoral care is concerned with individuals, groups, and the community at large. One cannot work with individuals without sooner or later becoming concerned about the social environment in which individuals live, and the community forces which shape human behavior. Many individual problems are created by social dynamics which are operating within the community as a whole.

Community work is broadly defined by the Gulbenkian Report, 1968, as a "method of dealing with problems of social change."<sup>1</sup> The Report continues,

Community work is essentially about the interrelations between people and social change, how to help people and the providers of services to bring about a more comfortable 'fit' between themselves and the constant change, how to survive and grow as persons in relation with others.<sup>2</sup>

The goal of community work is to help people to collectively help themselves by encouraging organization and maximum participation in decision-making at all levels in society. At the neighborhood level, the community worker will act as an enabler helping community groups to identify social problems and develop plans of action. At other levels the community worker might serve as a planner or coordinator helping to improve

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<sup>1</sup>Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, Community Work and Social Change (London, Longmans, Green and Company Limited, 1968), p. 28.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 29.

cooperation and communication between different social service agencies and helping bodies in the community. The fundamental identity of every community worker is a person who is concerned about the health, welfare, and general well-being of the total community in all of its complex and interrelated aspects.

Community work is not something new to the life of the Christian Church, although it has seldom been described as an important dimension of pastoral care. John Calvin's church in Geneva and John Knox's church in Edinburgh were both deeply involved in the affairs and concerns of their respective communities. Churches, faithful to the demands of the Gospel, have always emphasized mission and outreach. The Gulbenkian Report, itself, emphasizes the role of the Church in community work practice.

The churches are significant among voluntary organizations for two reasons. First they command a network of many men and a number of women working full time and of premises suitable for communal activities unrivalled by any other voluntary body. Second, they have in the past carried out a number of social welfare and education activities which have since become the responsibility of the community as a whole.<sup>3</sup>

#### The Basic Skills of Community Work

Community work is basically a problem-solving activity that utilizes the general skills of the problem-solving process. No form of community intervention, of course, is ever carried out in a neat and systematic way.

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

There are always starts, stops, retreats, failures, and then new beginnings. Community work, by definition, is complex and varied because its parameters of concern are so comprehensive. Nevertheless, there are generic skills in community work practice that can be applied to many different forms of social intervention.<sup>4</sup>

Community work involves a preliminary study and exploration of the neighborhood with which one is concerned. A community worker needs to be familiar with the social, economic, and cultural factors which influence community life. A preliminary study will seek to identify major social problems and areas of human need. The study should include statistical information as well as verbatim reports taken in dialogue with the residents. This study is sometimes referred to as a social survey and focuses on population density, age structure, occupations, social stratification, ethnic characteristics, religious affiliations of major groups in the community.

A community worker, like a counselor, relies on his or her ability to establish and maintain relationships of trust and support. The worker must always be willing to listen to people's concerns, to open-up channels of communication with diverse interest groups, and to make open-ended dialogue an important priority. The

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<sup>4</sup>For a detailed discussion about the basic skills of community work see pp. 68-70 of the Gulbenkian Report, Community Work and Social Change.

worker will invite different groups of persons to come together and share their problems with each other so as to encourage a collaborative approach to problem-solving. Building lines of communication and interpersonal relationships takes time and effort. Letter writing, telephoning, committee work, running errands, house calls, evening meetings are all part of the job. Community work is the building of social networks that will help people to recognize and resolve social problems in a collaborative way.

The community worker helps each group or organization to focus on problems-at-hand and to then formulate an appropriate strategy of action. Policy formation includes several important steps: (1) identifying goals and objectives; (2) clarifying the problem and establishing priorities; (3) suggesting alternative courses of action; and (4) examining policies and strategies in light of the realities and possibilities for change within the particular problem situation. Policy formation with community groups is a slow process and requires much patience and sensitivity to people's needs and interests. One person alone cannot hand down a blueprint for social action; strategy must be formed in a way that reflects consensus within the group at large.

The community worker must then help a social group to implement a plan of action towards resolving the problem at hand. Reflection must be channeled into decisions; policy into action. Implementing a plan



of action can be the most difficult stage in the whole problem-solving process. Many persons who say they desire social change will often resist taking concrete steps of implementation. The art of community work is helping people to gain consensus about policy and strategy in a way that will materialize into social action.

Evaluation is also an important skill in community work practice. The community worker must know how to help people to evaluate their actions and monitor what has been accomplished. Many groups and committees perpetuate themselves with no clear guidelines for judging performance. Evaluation can help a group to critique its own movement towards stated goals and objectives. It can lead to a restatement and reformulation of policy and strategies and sometimes of priorities as well.

#### Types of Community Work: Community Field Work<sup>5</sup>

Community field work is direct involvement with local people on the "grass roots" level. Field work involves meeting people "on their own home ground" at

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<sup>5</sup>There is no consensus about a typology for the kinds of community work that is currently practiced. The Gulbenkian Report, Community Work and Social Change speaks of three strands of community work: (1) direct work with local people; (2) agency and inter-agency activities; and (3) forecasting and planning. In 1973, another study rephrased the basic sub-divisions of the Gulbenkian Report to read: (1) community field work; (2) community organization; and (3) community planning. See The Community Work Group, Current Issues in Community Work (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1973), p. 48. This typology is used in the following discussion.

the street corner, in the market-place, and at general community functions. Over a period of time contacts are established, relationships are formed, and activities are planned. The community worker is known because of his active "presence" in the area. He listens to people as they express their problems and concerns, and he himself experiences the problems, first hand. Generally, community field work is a process of helping people to develop activities and facilities already in existence in the neighborhood; but at times it will involve taking action upon neglected or unrecognized social needs. At such times, community work may include the more abrasive strategies of community action utilizing the tactics of confrontation and conflict.

#### A Practical Illustration (1)<sup>6</sup>

(A Christian Action Housing Project)

During the early 1960's the Reverend Richard F. Holloway was serving as the rector of St. Margaret and St. Mungo's Scottish Episcopal Church, Glasgow. Together with a large group from his congregation Rev. Holloway launched a community action project that resulted in the

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<sup>6</sup>All case studies in this chapter on community work identify the specific names of some of the participants in the case. The reason this is done is that it is not believed necessary to maintain confidentiality of persons involved in the community work situations here described. Second, the names can be identified in the footnotes because of extensive quoting from reports written by many of the participants. Third, each name has only been used after consulting with the participant and asking for permission. Thus, Chapter 9 is different, in this respect, from Chapters 7 and 8 in which names have remained confidential.

establishment of the Christian Action (Glasgow) Housing Association in 1966. The project has been described as the "response of one congregation to the enormous pastoral problems" presented by the conditions of poverty in the Gorbals district of the city.<sup>7</sup>

Conditions of multiple deprivation had been more acute in Glasgow than in any other major city in Britain. The rate of infant mortality (32 per 1000 births in 1964), delinquency, inadequate housing, population density, child abuse, and poor schooling were the highest in the country.<sup>8</sup> In 1966 Glasgow had a total housing stock of 377,000 units of accommodation of which 45% were unacceptable by public sanitary standards and 98,000 technically unfit for human habitation. It was estimated that 34,000 people lived more than four to a room and 90,000 lived more than three to a room. A total of 38% of Glasgow homes lacked a fixed bath or shower and 22% were without private, indoor water closets (toilets).<sup>9</sup> In the Gorbals district

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<sup>7</sup>Richard F. Holloway, "Poverty and Pastoral Care," unpublished thesis for Union Theological Seminary, 1967, p. 9.

<sup>8</sup>Mary McLean, "An Examination of a Particular Project in terms of its Community Action Characteristics and Objectives," an unpublished thesis for Glasgow University, 1965, p. 6.

<sup>9</sup>Holloway, op. cit., p. 5.

alone, with a population of 18,000 inhabitants, 63% of the houses were declared "unfit" for sanitary or structural reasons by the Glasgow Corporation.<sup>10</sup> In one tenement house on Peebles Street, 90 people were using an outdoor toilet during the winter time because the plumbing had broken down on the top two floors and was left unrepaired by the landlords. The local residents called it the "89 seater". In two flats, the tenants were cooking their meals over a "coal fire" because they couldn't afford a cooker.<sup>11</sup> Of the 676 families surveyed by the Christian Action Research Team only 149 families had the use of a bath and 93 were using outside toilets.<sup>12</sup>

Inadequate housing, intense overcrowding, and lack of clean toilet facilities created appalling conditions for health and sanitation. There were epidemic cases of diarrhea and dysentery, called by the Glaswegians "green dysentery". There were high rates of acute respiratory infections (colds, bronchitis, grippe) related to the multiple use of toilet facilities and the "damp" from poor wall insulation. Infectious diseases spread from house to house (measles, chicken pox, whooping cough, skin diseases). Often unreported and unrecorded

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<sup>10</sup> Christian Action, The Gorbals, 1965 (Glasgow, Christian Action Housing Association, 1965), p.1-32.

<sup>11</sup> The information was taken from a personal interview with the Reverend Richard Holloway.

<sup>12</sup> See The Gorbals, 1965, op. cit., p.6-7.

were the high rates of injury from child abuse and accidents within the home.<sup>13</sup> Finally, the conditions of multiple deprivation created high rates of social pathology, e.g. crime, alcoholism, mental illness, drug addiction, and teenage gang fighting.

#### Phase One: Education and Assessment

In 1964 the St. Margaret and St. Mungo's Church launched an organized program of pastoral care for the Laurieston-Gorbals district of the city. The first step was educational: to discover the needs of the people living in the neighborhood. What problems did the people encounter in daily life? What were their concerns, fears, and hopes? What were the distinctive socio-economic features of the district? These questions and more were discussed by various groups in the church. A house-to-house visitation was organized so that the congregation could see and hear for itself the kinds of problems that people were facing. Some members went to the public libraries to research the factual statistics about the area. Others educated themselves about public laws and bylaws relating to health and housing conditions. The education-assessment phase culminated in a district survey. Some of the findings are as follows:

Mr. and Mrs. K. and eight children. Accommodation: one room in a four room apartment shared by three other families. Comments: The whole apartment is in a condition of almost apocalyptic squalor.

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<sup>13</sup>Holloway, op. cit., pp. 5-7.



The lavatory, which has to be flushed with a bucket of water, has no light, and contains the common tap in the house (which only works, anyway, when water is not being drawn by the people downstairs). There is no gas in this apartment, so all cook on their coal fires. The walls are alive with bugs, which are frequently found cavorting in sugar bowls and on the chests of sleeping children.

Mr. and Mrs. D. and four children. Accommodation: one room in a four room apartment shared by three other families. Comments: Electricity was cut off in this flat a week ago because the landlady had not paid the quarterly bill. Mr. D. understandably refused to pay that part of his rent which goes towards electricity. He has been ordered to quit the premises by Monday. The room, as far as it could be inspected by candlelight, was in a dreadful state. Water was seeping onto the floor at the sink. Mr. D. has to supply water for the whole apartment. The water closet has to be flushed by bucket. Mr. D. says he usually walks to the nearest public lavatory.<sup>14</sup>

#### Phase Two: Community Action

During the educative phase of the program some important discoveries were made. It was discovered that the 1959 Rent Act gave to each tenant the right of appeal to a tribunal, if he felt that the rent, set by the landlord, was too high. It was also discovered, in a comparative study, that rents for privately "factored" tenements were two to three times higher than rents paid for Corporation housing. Here was an issue that called for collective action. Through the encouragement of the church, scores of families began to apply to the Rent Tribunal for a rent adjustment. In each situation, the tenants won their case and rents were reduced by more than half, sometimes by 75%.

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 10-11.

More important than the material benefits were the psychological victories. Families in the Gorbals began to feel that there was some hope, that their conditions could be changed. There developed a new sense of pride, confidence, and esprit de corps amongst the tenants. Writes Holloway about the reaction,

By uniting against the landlord some kind of unity of purpose was achieved by scores of hitherto apathetic people. New courage was discovered.... But the most significant thing of all was that for the first time in their lives many people had actually taken a hand in altering, for the better, the circumstances of their lives...(there was a) new-founded dignity of many men and women who had, by taking action, started to break-out of their prisons of apathy.<sup>15</sup>

Another important discovery was made. A Glasgow Corporation bylaw stated that it was the responsibility of landlords to keep their property "wind and water tight"; a basic "condition of let". The landlords of the Gorbals tenements had made no attempt to keep their property wind and water tight, not to speak of many other repairs that were neglected. The St. Margaret and St. Mungo's action group worked with the tenants to organize a series of rent strikes. Each landlord was notified of needed-repairs and given plenty of time to complete the job (in each case requests were dismissed contemptuously). Formal notification was then given the landlord that rent would be withheld if the conditions were neglected. After a stated period of time the rent was paid over to Rev. Holloway who

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid., pp. 12-14.

deposited the money in a bank account, pending the satisfactory completion of household repairs. When the landlords, in turn, took the matter to court for arrears-of-rent, the press would be notified and the newspaper pictures would be used as court evidence for the tenants. The evidence proved, in each case, that the property was far from "wind and water tight" and often the trial ended with the landlord himself being fined.

Once again, the victories gave to the tenants a short-term feeling of pride and success. It was their first experience of seeing "the system" begin to work in their favor. But from a long-term perspective, the tactics of confrontation brought only symptomatic relief. The tenants still returned home to conditions of poverty and multiple-deprivation. The harsh realities of their social environment were not altered. Even the esprit de corps was short lived. The tactics of confrontation were important at one particular stage of the problem, but such tactics could never constitute the whole cure. Writes Holloway,

But all of this meant, in the long-run, only symptomatic relief....It was at this point that we became aware that a tactic of abrasion was not enough. We needed some strategy of reconstruction. We needed to alter the whole context. We had to find adequate homes.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

### Phase Three: Reconstruction and Development

The strategy for reconstruction took shape around the idea of a housing association. It was suggested to the St. Margaret and St. Mungo's action group that they should consider forming a non-profit making, voluntary association with the power to raise and borrow money and then to purchase and rehabilitate property. This idea was encouraged by Christian Action in London. In 1966 the Christian Action (Glasgow) Housing Association was officially registered with the city corporation. Fund raising on a national level began the same year. Later in the year the Glasgow Corporation agreed to enter into "a quasi-official partnership" with the Association, using it as a "rehabilitating arm" of their own housing policy.<sup>17</sup> The Corporation offered them a loan of £200,000 and by the end of the year over 100 homes had been purchased in the districts of Gorbals, East Pollokshields, and Govanhill.

The overall sequence of the St. Margaret and St. Mungo's action program was not pre-determined. It evolved out of the on-going interaction process between tenants, landlords, members of the Church, and city officials. At each stage of development the tenants acted as full-participants in the decision-making process. Each phase of development, however, did follow a common pattern found in many other community action

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

projects, that of (a) assessment, (b) confrontation, (c) reconstruction. The importance of stage three cannot be over-emphasized for ultimately conflict can only be justified if it leads to constructive community development. It was a sign of healthy maturity that the St. Margaret's program moved in this direction.

### Community Organization

Community work also functions at a "middle level" of social interaction: the inter-agency level of involvement.<sup>18</sup> Community organization is directed towards the improvement, coordination, and development of existing services and resources between statutory agencies, between statutory and voluntary organizations, and between the administrators of social services and the people being served. Community organization emphasizes the value of cooperation and coordination in the promotion of all helping activities. Such coordination may be "vertical" in nature, as between local groups and the respective city, regional, and national governing organizations, or coordination may be "horizontal" as between representatives of different professions or service agencies. Often, community organization will involve the establishment of a formal coordinating body to facilitate inter-agency communication and to promote a more comprehensive approach to community care, e.g.

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<sup>18</sup>See the Gulbenkian Report, Community Work and Social Change, op. cit., p. 35, and also Current Issues in Community Work, op. cit., p. 48.



community forums, councils of social service, rural community councils. Community work at the middle level will involve more committee work and paper work than is found at the neighborhood level of engagement. One important area for cooperation and consultation is that between the representatives of various professional groups in the community, e.g. clergy, general practitioners, teachers, health nurses, social workers, policy, psychiatrists, and city planners. The following case studies emphasize the need for ministers to initiate and be involved in this communication process.

#### A Practical Illustration (2)

##### (Mental Health Forum)

A mental health forum was introduced by Murray Leishman, chaplain, and Bruce Ritson, psychiatrist, at the Royal Edinburgh Hospital in June 1972. Each month, psychiatrists, social workers, and clergy (from designated catchment areas) meet at the hospital for purposes of discussion. This meeting reflects the growing awareness on the part of both psychiatric staff and clergy of the value of consultation, professional cooperation, and a more comprehensive approach to community mental health. Writes Leishman,

It is evident that there is considerable overlap between the work of clergy and mental health services. Both are regularly involved in helping individuals at times of emotional crisis and both, but particularly ministers, have long term responsibility for their clients.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup>Murray Leishman, "Sector Mental Health Forum," unpublished report for the Royal Edinburgh Hospital, Edinburgh, 1972, p. 1.

The aim of the mental health forum is (a) to establish "working links" between psychiatric staff from the Royal Edinburgh Hospital and Edinburgh clergymen on a regular basis; (b) to review and assess available resources in the respective catchment areas; (c) to facilitate (if desirable) the process of consultation on specific cases faced by clergy in their pastoral ministry (recognizing the importance of confidentiality); (d) to identify "the difficulties and opportunities" involved in collaborative work between the two professions. Each of these aims is one aspect of a general goal: to explore the "common ground" between ministers and psychiatrists and to enhance the possibilities for joint cooperation in each catchment area.

#### A Practical Illustration (3)

##### (A Community Mental Health Meeting)

Once a month, the Reverend Ian Cowie of Richmond Craigmiller Church attends a community mental health meeting. The meeting is held at the Craigmiller Social Work Department and is chaired by a senior social worker with special responsibilities for community health. Others attending the meeting include: a community psychiatrist, a psychiatrist attached to a mental health hospital, a health visitor, a general practitioner, representatives of the Community Education Service, Epilepsy Society, and Sick Children's Society, a lecturer from the Social Administration Department of the University, 3 local community workers, 3 social workers

attached to the area, and local ministers.

The aim of the meeting is to improve communication and cooperation between the various groups, professions, and agencies in Craigmillar that have a special responsibility or concern for the general mental health conditions and health standards of the community. Such a meeting serves as a focal point for exploring the aims, functions, and goals of each respective agency or profession; for expressing similarities and differences of interest vis-a-vis problems in the community, and for exploring possibilities toward team-work, consultation, and other levels of interaction. Topics of discussion have included: (a) the needs of patients who are discharged from mental health hospitals; (b) the problems and benefits of running a walk-in-clinic; and (c) the difficulties involved in identifying and assessing general conditions of social pathology.

Rev. Cowie believes that he has an important contribution to make at these meetings. As a minister, he lives in the community and is able to develop a long-term perspective on the social problems that people face. Unlike most social workers or psychiatrists, the minister relates to individuals in the community throughout the various phases of the human life cycle. He is able to watch people function in various spheres of activities and within different kinds of relationships. He knows people in their homes, on the street, at work, and at play. These experiences give the minister a particular

perspective of depth and breadth, which he can bring to the community mental health meeting.

In practice, however, Rev. Cowie finds that his contributions go unrecognized. He finds that there is little formal acceptance or acknowledgement, from other professions, of the valuable role a minister can play in community health programs. Cooperation, if and when it does exist, occurs because of the informal, day-to-day relationships that Rev. Cowie has established with professionals, as individuals, during the years of on-the-spot involvement in Craigmillier.

#### Community Planning and Social Policy

Comprehensive community planning is the process of imaginative and scientific forecasting of social development and social change for purposes of allocating scarce resources to best serve future human need. Planning and policy formulation take place at a more "impersonal and abstract" level of operation than either direct neighborhood work or inter-agency activity.<sup>20</sup> It is the attempt to reorder and redirect priorities by anticipating the course of human events. This work is done by forecasting future trends in population number, migration patterns, housing policy (size and number), industrial and residential zoning, and decision-making at the level of local and national government. The results are used in the formulation of social policy

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<sup>20</sup> See Current Issues in Community Work, op. cit., p. 48.



and in the establishment of future aims and objectives. Community planning thus involves value judgments; judgments about what ought to be or should be. Good community planning is comprehensive in approach involving inter-agency cooperation and focusing on the total demographic, economic, and social needs of the community (as seen from a variety of perspectives). There is always a danger when planning decisions are made by single agencies for specific interest groups -- without considering the total consequences and effects upon a particular neighborhood. There is also a danger when demographic and economic considerations receive primary attention in neglect of general community needs. Dr. Wilfred Burns in his 1967 Presidential Address to the Institute of Town Planning is quoted as saying,

I believe we are driving along a cul-de-sac if we do not try to understand the relationship between environment and people's ways of living. With an understanding of this relationship there comes a greater knowledge of other factors affecting personal, family, and group life and of the complete lack of any social planning aimed at helping society in a comprehensive way....We are now approaching the stage where comprehensive social planning is unavoidable if we really believe in the love of human beings.<sup>21</sup>

The following case study is an example of community planning by a group of ministers and social workers

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<sup>21</sup>Dr. Wilfred Burns, "Presidential Address to the Institute of Town Planning," in Journal of the Town Planning Institute, LIII, 8 (Sept/Oct., 1967) and quoted in Community Work and Social Change, op. cit., p. 33.



vis-à-vis a housing project in the city of Glasgow.

#### A Practical Illustration (4)

##### (The Stirlingfauld High-Rise Flat)

During the early 1950's the Glasgow Corporation initiated a housing program designed to replace the traditional 4 story tenements with multi-story high rise flats. By February of 1967 there were 92 tower blocks in occupation and in May of 1969 the figure was 163.<sup>22</sup> Over 3/4 of these tower blocks were between 11-31 stories; two high-rise flats at Red Roads, Glasgow contained 31 stories. The Glasgow Corporation created five new estates, each estate containing 26 towers, bringing an influx of over 10,000 tenants into areas that formerly contained less than 2,000 occupants. In July of 1968 there were a total of 67,000 children between the ages of 1-14 living in high-rise flats with over 79% of them living above the 4th story. Some of the new estates had no shops (butcher, baker, chemists, laundrettes, hairdresser, shoerepair); no health or welfare services (doctors, dentists, social workers, health clinics); no recreational provisions (playgrounds, community centers); no place for group activities (committee rooms, auditoriums); and no focal points for social gatherings (pubs, restaurants, cafés, fish and chip shops, post office, library, or church).

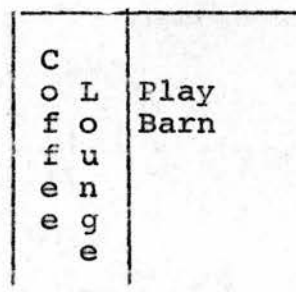
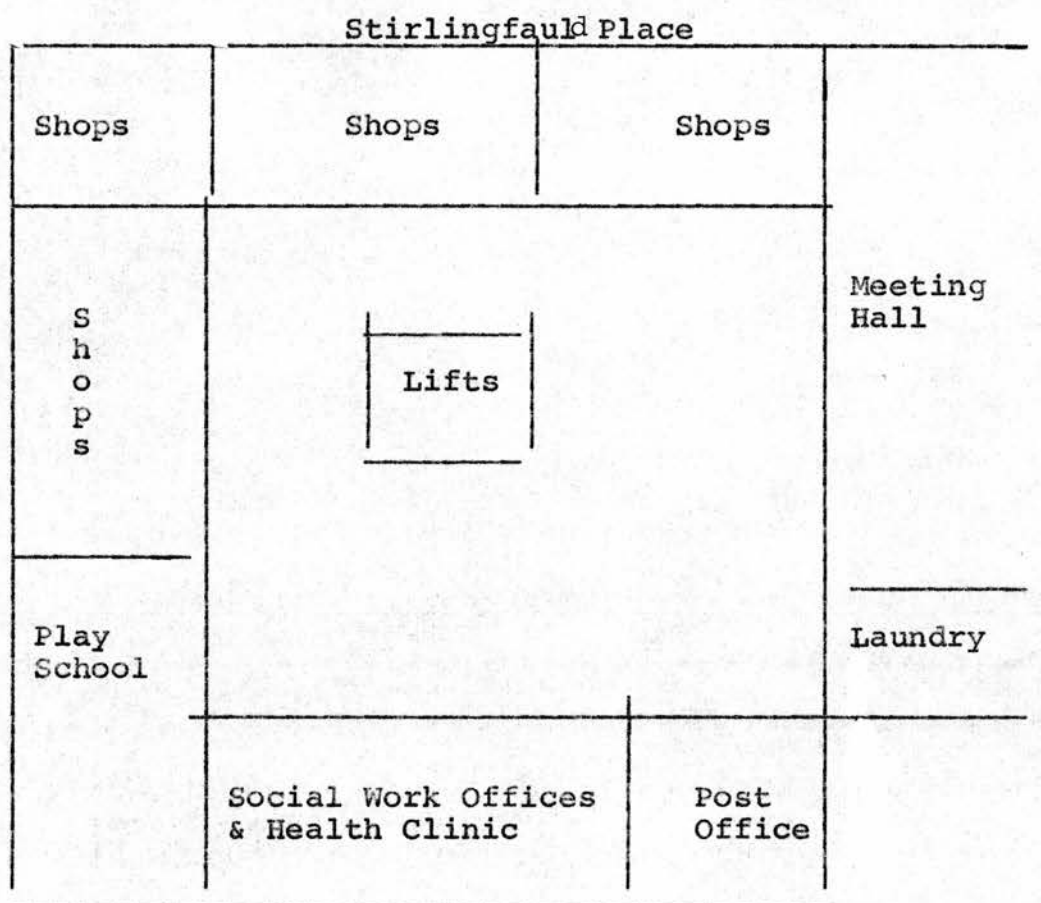
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<sup>22</sup>These facts and figures are taken from Pearl Jephcott, Homes in High Flats (Edinburgh, Oliver and Boyd, 1971).

Phase One: Planning

In 1971, the Glasgow Corporation began work on a 24 story tower block at Stirlingfauld Place in Hutchesontown-Gorbals. Concerned with the problem of social amenities for this building, a group of ministers, social workers, and community workers came together, under the auspices of the Crossroads Youth and Community Association, to discuss plans that were being made for the needs of the new occupants. After contacting the Housing Department, it was discovered that no plans existed for the provision of shops, health services, recreational facilities or other social amenities for the 2,000 new tenants soon expected. The group decided to take action and with the help of technical advisors, their own planning proposals for the allocation of ground floor space (inside and outside the building) were submitted to the Department. A series of meetings were arranged and the plans were eventually accepted by Corporation officials. The design was as follows:

Diagram (1)



Phase Two: Preparation

The new tenants of the Stirlingfauld tower block were expected to arrive in June, 1973. Ministers from Gorbals, Govanhill, and Pollokshields met with the

Crossroads Youth and Community Association to arrange for a "visitation program" to each family that moved into a flat. Preparations were made for groups to go from door to door explaining to the new arrivals about the services and facilities that were available to them; to give them general information about the district (location of shopping markets, times of Church worship services) and to "extend a hand" of welcome. A small brochure was printed with a list of important social services and telephone numbers to be handed out during the visitations.

### Phase Three: Implementation

Arrangements were made by a group of ministers in the area to initiate a series of home worship services within the high-rise flat community. One minister from Govanhill took up full time residence in the flats (his belief that he should be living where his people live). Plans were made to use his home as the starting point for these worship services with the hope of spreading out to other flats once other people began to join the group. It was felt by the ministers that house-to-house worship groups could be an important way of breaking down the barriers of isolation and the feeling of "being cut off" that other tenants in tower flats had encountered. The worship groups were designed particularly with view to the needs of older people; people uprooted from their attachments to their local neighborhood church;

people disabled with handicap or sickness; and people who for one reason or another couldn't get to Church on Sunday. It was hoped that these groups would serve as one focal point for communication and interaction by the tenants; one way of helping people to cope with their strange new environment, the high-rise, multi-story flat.

The above case study is a good example of ministers and others anticipating the potential needs of a new community through comprehensive community planning. It serves as an example of preventive pastoral care. The tower flats of Glasgow had become cul-de-sacs of violence, vandalism, boredom, and social isolation. The most significant of all social problems had been the absence of focal points for community interaction. The marked absence of shops, pubs, chip shops, post offices, even churches, had left deep psychological scars. The Crossroads Youth and Community Association, with the help of local ministers, attempted to anticipate these problems at Stirlingfauld Place through planning. Here, ministers, social workers, and others were able to work cooperatively for what they foresaw would be future needs within their community.

#### A Community Group Ministry: "The Gorbals Group"

During the years of 1954-1957 negotiations took place between several Scottish ministers and the Glasgow Presbytery of the Church of Scotland for the establishment



of a group ministry in the Laurieston-Gorbals district of Glasgow. The Gorbals Group was formally launched in December, 1957 at the ordination service of Rev. Geoffrey Shaw who was appointed as Assistant to the John Knox Church with special duties only in the Parish. The Group was initially composed of five members (three ministers) all of whom shared a house in the immediate neighborhood. By 1968 there were 14 members in the Group.<sup>23</sup>

The aim of the Group was to:

establish and maintain in the Laurieston area of Gorbals a Christian presence which by its nature would be more able than the existing Church organizations to become involved in depth in the total life of the area.<sup>24</sup>

Such a "presence" would be one that responded to human need whenever and wherever it was expressed and experienced. The Group understood its mission to be not one of proselytizing, but of providing an alternative form of Christian community to people otherwise alienated from the existing structures of the Church. Here was

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<sup>23</sup>These articles are the only reports with information about the Gorbals Group. See Geoffrey M. Shaw, "Report on Work of Gorbals Experiment," unpublished report for the Home Mission Committee of the Presbytery of Glasgow, 1968; Geoffrey M. Shaw, "The Gorbals Group," an unpublished report to the Home Board, 1973; Geoffrey M. Shaw, "The Community Worker: What He Does and The Skills He Requires," an unpublished report to the Community Work Group, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation, 1972. The articles are only available upon special request to the Rev. Geoffrey Shaw.

<sup>24</sup>Shaw, "Report on Work of Gorbals Experiment," op. cit., p. 1.

an opportunity to discover new ways in which the Christian Church might become more relevant to the needs and problems of the inner city. To provide this ministry, each member of the Gorbals Group joined together in group fellowship, to support one another in their mutual undertaking. The group was to share in a common purpose and a common way of life; expressed in Jesus' words about His own ministry, when he said,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He has anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor: He has sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captive and recovering of sight to the blind; to set at liberty those that are oppressed, and to proclaim a year when man may find acceptance with the Lord.

Luke 4: 18-19

Each member of the Group lives in the district of the Gorbals or in surrounding areas e.g., Govanhill and East Pollokshields. Likewise each member works in the area or in a profession, agency, or organization whose functions impinge on the needs and problems of the district in some way. It is felt by all that living in the neighborhood and sharing first hand in the problems and concerns of the people, is the most valuable aspect of the Group's total ministry.

Each Group member is involved in a local club, activity or organization in addition to his or her full time job. The clubs sponsored by the Group are always small, informal, and often unstructured. The Group is particularly concerned about the dangers and limitations of large formal organizations and structures as found

in the social work department and the institutional Church. It seeks instead to serve those people who often "fall through the net"; the young lad who won't join the formal boys club, the problem family that is overlooked by the social work department, the Christians who don't find their way to the local neighborhood churches.

Group members work with local community leaders and through neighborhood structures when and if they exist. The Group never tries to replace local leadership or set up rival clubs and programs. Its basic aim is to help people to collectively help themselves through full participation in the resolution of their own problems. Such an aim is often very difficult to achieve. But a Group member will quickly make himself "redundant" if and when another person in the community is ready to take over a job.

Each member makes a monthly financial contribution to the Group's Outreach Fund. Originally, all the members of the Group shared in a strict economic discipline whereby incomes were pooled and redistributed in a weekly allowance on the basis of need. Because of practical considerations, this system ended in 1967, but the basic value of common ownership (as opposed to private ownership of property) is still upheld by most members. This value is reflected in the policy to live, as far as possible, in rented property rather than

purchasing one's own house.

The central activity in the life of the Group is the weekly Thursday evening meeting. Attendance at this meeting takes priority over all other commitments. Here, every important matter which affects the life of the Group is discussed and resolved. The Thursday meeting is the key focal point of the Group's common life together. It is a time of sharing, communication, and fellowship, symbolized by the eating of a common meal and the formal celebration of Holy Communion.

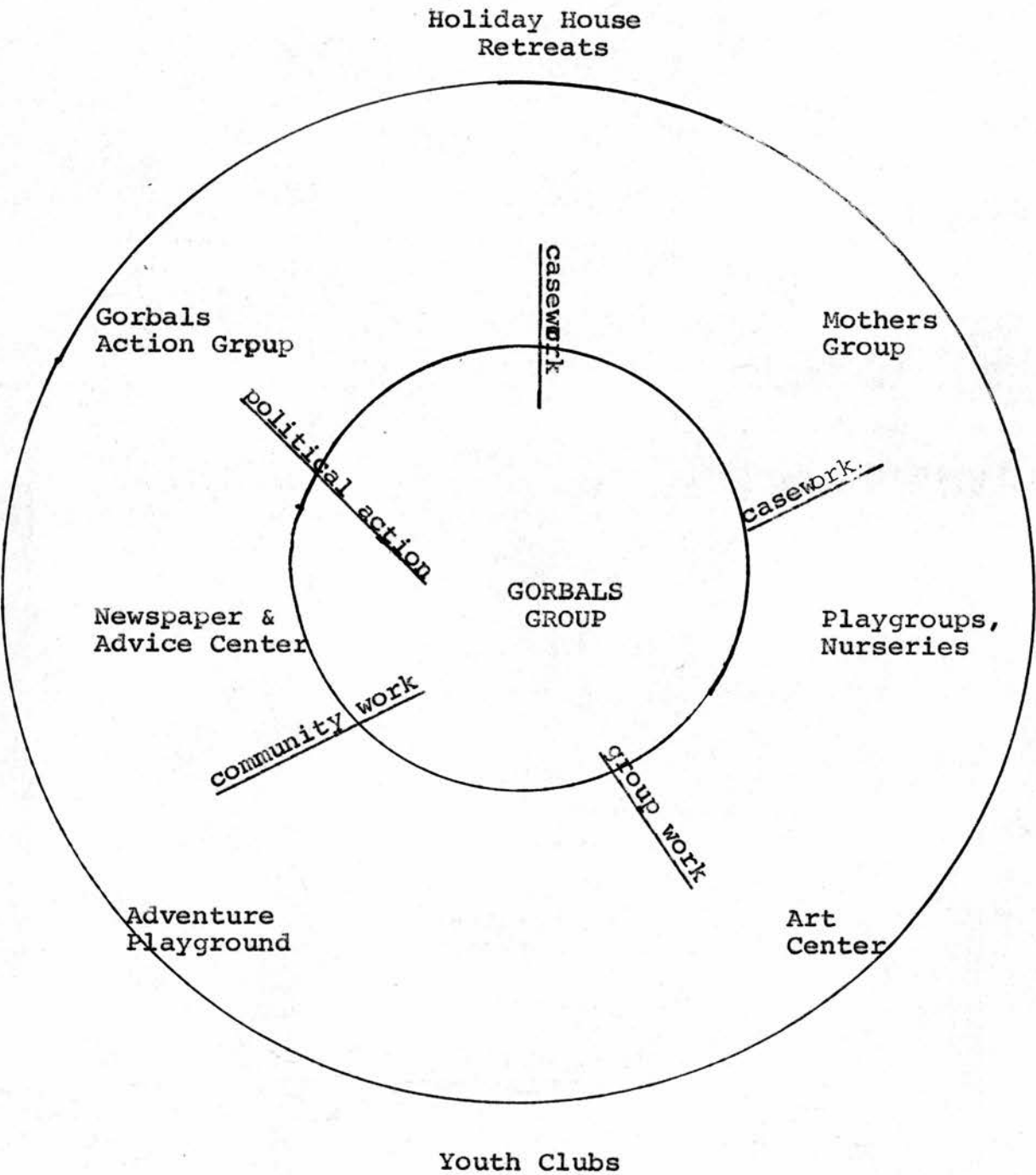
Over the course of many years the Group has evolved as a structure that can be best diagramed as a wheel: the Group's life together, at the center; and the organizations, clubs, and activities on the rim. The spokes of the wheel are the methods and skills that Group members use in their neighborhood work. (See page 220). While no rigid method or approach has ever been laid down, the members tend to subdivide their work along the same general lines that are followed in social work practice; that is to say, a combination of casework, group work, and community work methods. The basic approach is a tendency towards:

non-directive rather than directive counselling;  
to informal rather than formal interview; to  
permissive rather than authoritarian discipline  
in group situations; and always in the direction  
of making time available for lengthy discussion  
with groups and individuals where possible.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>25</sup>Ibid., p. 6.

Diagram (2 )



The Hub and Spokes of the  
Gorbals Group



The general organizational, communication, and relationship skills are all essential and generic to this work. The Group also stresses the value of cooperation and the importance of team-work. The basic skill, however, is what one member of the Group calls "engagement skills"; that being the ability to adapt to sub-standard living conditions; to accept being on 24 hour call; to relate to people of diverse backgrounds; to adjust quickly; to tolerate overwhelming tension, frustration, and disappointment; to be open and supportive and yet able to set limits and standards of discipline; and finally to be able to participate fully in the area as a whole person without over-identification and over-involvement with the problems at hand.

Every Thursday evening, three weeks of the month, there is a Group meeting. The normal pattern of the meeting is as follows:

- (1) Institution of the Sacraments of the Lord's Supper
- (2) Meal
- (3) Business or discussion on a particular topic, sometimes introduced by a visitor
- (4) Continuation of the Sacrament: Reading, Exposition, and Prayer, Distribution of the Elements
- (5) Prayer of Intercession and Benediction

The worship is simple and informal, attempting to weave together the ordinary, every-day concerns of the people present. Before the prayer of intercession, each member is asked for names of individuals in the community who are known to be suffering and in need. The names are then included in the prayer which begins,

Let us bring to God the needs of His world, remembering especially the people of this place in their homes, in the streets, and at their work.

We remember.....and.....and.....

(The prayer concludes with the commitment of each member of the Group and the community as a whole.)

We commit.....and.....(Group members not present)  
 We commit our families and friends.  
 We commit all those who come about our houses and our organizations.  
 We commit ourselves, and each the other.

May God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit bless us and all those whom we love, now and always.  
 Amen.<sup>26</sup>

The Gorbals Group has acted both directly and indirectly as the "pastoral arm" for the churches in the Laurieston-Gorbals district of Glasgow.<sup>27</sup> Unfortunately, this vital contribution by the Group has often gone unrecognized by local churches and by the Church of

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<sup>26</sup>Gorbals Group, "Order of Service for Communion," unpublished manuscript. Available only by writing to the Rev. Geoffrey Shaw, Glasgow.

<sup>27</sup>Not everyone in the Gorbals Group would view its function as the "pastoral arm" of the Church. The unique feature of the Group was that it incorporated persons with a wide variety of perspectives into its midst. The above remark is clearly my own observation.

Scotland at large. It is therefore important to spell out what the contributions of group ministry are for the practice of pastoral care.

First, the Group has demonstrated the value of living in the neighborhood that is being served. It has enabled Group members to experience and share, at first hand, the needs and problems of the community. It has created the possibilities for "two-way access to homes"; an impossibility for the social worker or minister who lives "outside" of the area of his work. Group members have been readily available during times of crisis and have had to face their own crises within the context of the neighborhood environment. By living in the area, the Group has helped to affirm the intrinsic values of the community; values that stand out even amidst the poverty and deprivation. As one lad put it, "It is a dump, but it's a good dump," Pastoral care has taken place in and through the simple act of "presence."

Second, the Group has demonstrated the importance of informality and flexibility in pastoral care. The Group has been able to serve many individuals and families who would otherwise have "fallen through the net" of the formal social service agencies in the district. It has learned from hard experience that many people in the inner city cannot or will not respond to the formal overtures of the institutionalized services, not only in regards to formal boys clubs, youth brigades; women's

organizations, etc., but also in regards to the institutional church. In other words, the Group has demonstrated the value of experimental "bridging structures" between the major institutions of society (be they church, welfare agency, or school), and the people who receive these services at the neighborhood level.

Third, the Group has shown the value of dialogue between persons of different points of view. Its flexibility and accessibility has made possible many forms of liaison with other professions, agencies, and services. The Group itself has been enriched by the cross-fertilization of ideas and perspectives from members of different nationalities, different religions, denominations, and different philosophical points of view, e.g. atheists, agnostics, humanists, as well as Christians. By emphasizing the implicit values of Christian witness rather than over-emphasizing explicit proclamation, the Group has been able to maintain links and contact with people from all walks of life, particularly with people of different faiths (of vital importance in a city like Glasgow where tensions between Protestants and Catholics can "run high" and where there is a large and growing influx of overseas immigrants of Moslem, Indian, and Chinese background).

Fourth, the Group could never have existed if there hadn't been the fellowship and mutual support with-

in the group itself. It would have been impossible for individuals to have "gone it alone" given the strains, tensions, and frustrations of pastoral ministry in the inner city. The Group has demonstrated the vital importance of "support-structures" or "support groups" in all forms of pastoral care.

Finally, the Group has served as a pioneer experiment for future ministries in the inner city. It has also served as a "forerunner" to the Church itself, pointing to new directions that the Church must take in the future. Perhaps the "antennas" of any large organization will always be more sensitive to the needs and problems of the times than the "body" structures. The "Report on Work of Gorbals Experiment," concludes with these words.

We believe that the partial success of the Group has paved the way for a whole variety of experimental approaches on similar lines, not only in regard to geographical areas such as Gorbals but also in regard to different functional areas of society, in particular, in regard to industry. The importance of the small group structure; the value of the close relationships in a predominately non-ministerial Group; the residence within, and the real belonging to, an area of considerable social pressure; the vitally close relationship of concerned action with the interpretation of Christian faith; perhaps also the 'secularizing' of the Christian Community -- all these seem to us to be important, to be valid, and to present a challenge. We believe that it is in the willingness of the Church to reform structures rather than to make marginal reforming alterations of worship or even doctrine that the future of the Church in the inner city lies.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup>Shaw, "The Gorbals Group," op. cit., p. 14.



Pastoral care is a comprehensive program of Christian ministry involving the use of casework, group work and community work skills to resolve problems that are encountered in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community situations. A comprehensive program includes the flexible utilization of all three methods of intervention by members and friends of a church. Pastoral care as casework focuses upon the individual as the primary unit of concern. As group work, pastoral care focuses upon the social dynamics and relationships that develop within the context of a group situation. Community work is the third method of pastoral intervention, focusing upon the community-at-large as the overall area of concern. At times, depending on the problems-at-hand, one method of intervention will be used more often than others. But, by-in-large, a comprehensive program of pastoral ministry will utilize all three methods of pastoral care interchangeably.

Casework, group work, and community work are three distinct methods yet all three methods share common elements. The use of each method is only successful when an atmosphere of trust, openness, and cooperation has first been established. Each method focuses upon human life in a social context, as it is lived out within the concentric circles of interpersonal and social relationships. Finally, each method is concerned with resolving problems, at the individual, group, and community level, which stand in the way of human

fulfillment. Pastoral care as casework, group work, and community work, is a way of doing Christian ministry in relationship to problems that are encountered in the midst of community life; it is a way of seeking to make and keep human life fully human in the world in which we live. All three methods are vital dimensions of pastoral care in practice.

PART IV

A CRITIQUE OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

## Introduction

Pastoral theology is the over-arching theory of pastoral care. What is the difference between pastoral theology and other theological disciplines? Pastoral theology is distinguished from other branches of theological inquiry by its particular task. The task is to provide: (1) a methodology for correlating theological insights with insights drawn from the social, psychological, and human sciences in general; (2) a knowledge base and perspective that helps towards understanding the dynamics of human motivation and behavior; (3) a practice theory for pastoral care that reflects the demands and goals of the Christian Gospel; and (4) a theological framework that serves as a normative basis for understanding the direction and purpose of all pastoral ministry.

Eduard Thurneysen, Thomas Oden, and Seward Hiltner are three major theorists in the field of pastoral theology today. With the exception of the late Paul Tillich, few other Protestant theologians have made such an important contribution to the field as these men. Their writings, taken collectively, provide a comprehensive picture of the issues and debates involved in the task of doing pastoral theology.

Part IV is a critique of the writings of each theorist. The critique is undertaken with the intention of setting the stage for a new perspective in pastoral theology; a perspective that presents a comprehensive

picture of the social context of pastoral care when practiced as a problem-solving ministry. Therefore, the critique involves a definite point of view about the direction pastoral theology should take in order to be adequate to its task.

This perspective is based on an understanding of pastoral care as a problem-solving ministry, undertaken in response to what God is doing in the world to make and keep human life fully human. The perspective reflects the belief that pastoral theology must provide: (a) the opportunity for two-way dialogue between theology and the human sciences, recognizing always, the possibility that insights of a theological nature can emerge from the human sciences as well as from the various branches of theological inquiry; (b) a knowledge base that is comprehensive enough to explain the dynamics of human behavior in both personal and a social context; (c) a practice theory that is adequate to the problems encountered in a community-based, community-centered ministry; (d) a theological framework that fully reflects the dynamic power and scope of the Word of God as it is manifested in the world; and one that does justice to the theological context of all God's activities and the corresponding implications for a problem-solving ministry.



## Chapter 10

Eduard Thurneysen: A Theology of the Word

Eduard Thurneysen's A Theology of Pastoral Care is a study of the theological foundation which undergirds and guides the practice of pastoral ministry. Thurneysen seeks to place the practice of pastoral care on a firm footing within the context of the Christian Church. He turns for support to the writings of the Reformation fathers, Luther, Calvin, and Bucer as well as to the neo-orthodox tradition of his close friend, Karl Barth. Thurneysen finds the authoritative sanction for Seelsorge (the cure of souls) in a theology of the Word and in the Reformation concept of church discipline. The Word of God is the measure and purpose of pastoral ministry; it stands in judgment over all decisions; determines the nature and scope of practice; and establishes its goals and objectives. Pastoral care is the application of the Word in the setting of the Church by means of care and discipline.

The Methodology of Pastoral Theology

Thurneysen's major premise is that pastoral theology is a science of the Word of God and requires only the Gospel and doctrines of the faith as a point of reference and source of knowledge. A theology of the Word is not just one source of knowledge among other frames of reference but is the basis of all knowledge about humankind. What it takes to make life human in the world is discovered in God's act of revelation in Jesus Christ

as proclaimed in the good news of the Gospel. Pastoral theology is a self-contained discipline that begins and ends with the Word of God.

Pastoral theology has no need for a method of correlation because theology and the human sciences (psychology, sociology, history, anthropology, etc.) exist as distinct realms of knowledge. Between knowledge of the Word and the human sciences there is a gap or breach that cannot be transcended by the human mind. Insights from the human sciences cannot be correlated with doctrines from Christian theology for the Word of God is encountered as the "verbum alienum"; a realm of thought "toto genere" from human efforts at self-understanding.<sup>1</sup> Even natural theology, according to Thurneysen, makes a mistake when it assumes that people have a "faculty" or "inherent potentiality" for religious self-awareness. Human thought systems begin with reason but a theology of the Word begins with God's revelation in and through the Gospel. Pastoral theology is distorted when people attempt to draw insights from two sources, "revelation and reason, the Holy Scriptures and man's innate capacity to think, learn, and experience."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Eduard Thurneysen, A Theology of Pastoral Care (Richmond, John Knox Press, 1963), pp. 90-96. Thurneysen uses the terms "verbum alienum" and "toto genere" at many places throughout the text when describing the Word of God and the relationship of the Word to the realm of human thought.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 93.

The principle of correlation presupposes that there is common ground between a Biblical understanding of human nature and a scientific understanding of human behavior. Thurneysen argues, however, that there is no point of congruence between human knowledge and divine revelation. Human experience itself does not contain the seeds or provide the basis for drawing analogies about how God is working in the world to heal and to save through Jesus Christ. Both the principle of correlation and "analogia entis" fail to recognize the irreparable gap between sacred and profane realms of knowledge, Writes Thurneysen,

true perception of man is to be gained only from Holy Scripture. Man is created by the Word of God; thus, he can only be perceived in faith through the Word. Here the spiritual and the purely natural knowledge of human nature part ways. True pastoral care must be Biblical.<sup>3</sup>

But is there any relationship that can exist between theology and the human sciences, in particular the discipline of psychology? Yes, argues Thurneysen, when psychology is used as an auxiliary science. The purpose of psychology in pastoral care is to describe human behavior but not to interpret it; to furnish the raw data of human experience but not to establish the normative framework for understanding healing and health. The task of the psychologist in pastoral care is to describe the phenomena observed; the task of the minister is to interpret the data from the perspective of a

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 66.

theology of the Word. When psychology leaves the realm of description and enters the realm of metaphysical speculation it transgresses the boundaries of its own science. Thurneysen writes,

Psychology should abandon any attempt to make declarations reaching beyond the investigation and description of man's inner being into the realm of philosophy and speculative thinking. Psychology is to stick to its subject. It is to be pursued phenomenologically. It must intend to be nothing but natural science in the broadest sense.<sup>4</sup>

Thurneysen's methodological principles, however, should not be allowed to go unchallenged. Pastoral theology would be seriously diminished if it allowed for no contributions from the human sciences as to what it takes to make and keep human life fully human in the world. Just at a time when the human sciences are benefiting from interdisciplinary approaches to their own respective disciplines, pastoral theology would be cut off from the advantages of cross-fertilization. Thurneysen's methodological principles would leave pastoral theology uninfluenced by and unresponsive to changing models and conceptions of human behavior within the human sciences. To accept a theology of the Word as "verbum alienum"; a realm of knowledge "toto genere" from other realms, would undermine any effort to discover points of congruence between statements about sickness and health and a theological doctrine of sin and salvation. Insights

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 210.



drawn from the human sciences about human motivation and human behavior are too rich, too significant, and too vital to be dismissed outright for the purposes of pastoral theology. Thurneysen's method is a deductive approach to theology.<sup>5</sup> Insights about human behavior and human nature are deduced from a theology of the Word. But this method, in effect, turns pastoral theology into a discipline of applied dogmatics; an approach which completely reverses the long hard struggle of pastoral care away from its "Babylonian captivity to dogmatic theology."<sup>6</sup>

Without a method of correlation, pastoral theology becomes a closed system of thought. Theology is cut off from the wisdom that is found in the dialectic between action and reflection. Letting theory and theology be shaped and influenced by human experience and insights gleaned from the concrete field situation is unimportant in a theology of the Word as developed by Thurneysen. He provides no case studies for purposes of theological

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<sup>5</sup>An excellent analysis and critique of Thurneysen's approach is found in an article by Dr. Alastair Campbell entitled, "Is Practical Theology Possible?" Dr. Campbell describes Thurneysen's theological method as deductive in contrast to Seward Hiltner's inductive approach. "It is clear," writes Campbell, "that they approach the definition of practical theology from opposite ends of the theological spectrum." See Rev. Dr. Alastair V. Campbell, "Is Practical Theology Possible?" Scottish Journal of Theology, XXV, 2 (May, 1972), p. 221.

<sup>6</sup>James Luther Adams and Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Care in the Liberal Church (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1970), p. 148.



reflection. As presented, a theology of the Word is a closed theoretical system cut off from the insights of the human sciences and new insights which can emerge in the correlation of different perspectives on human behavior, as well as insights that come out of praxis, the integration of action and reflection.

#### A Doctrine of Sin and Grace

The knowledge base of Thurneysen's theory of pastoral care is a Biblical-theological understanding of sin and grace. For Thurneysen, statements about human behavior are derived from a theology of the Word; in other words, anthropology is simply a sub-set of dogmatic theology. A knowledge base that is of significance for the practice of pastoral care must be constructed from the message of the Christian Gospel.

The fundamental difference between mankind and the animal kingdom, according to Thurneysen, is that man has been created in the image of God. "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him" (Genesis 1:26). The impress of God's image upon the human personality is the precondition for healing but at the same time a doctrine of creation does not guarantee progressive human perfection. The false assumption of liberalism and pietism is that human nature is infinitely perfectable through progressive steps of self-actualization and fulfillment. This assumption, for Thurneysen, stands in contradiction to a Biblical understanding of sin.

Pastoral care takes place in a world that lives under the conditions of sin. Human fulfillment is not simply a matter of "awakening" a dormant capacity for growth and self-actualization within human beings but includes the awareness that life is lived in the midst of the principalities and powers, radically estranged from the source and ground of all Creation. Writes Thurneysen,

Between us and God stands not only the act of creation -- that act which unites us with God just as much as it withdraws us from God -- but between us and God stands the dark riddle of our sin, by which we have destroyed God's creation and with it our union with God.<sup>7</sup>

The root of human estrangement lies in man's separation from God. Sickness is a symptom of "a deeper metaphysical disturbance."<sup>8</sup> The deep rooted connection that exists between sickness and sin is not one that can be described or verified by theories from the human sciences. The relationship can only be discerned through the eyes of faith and from the perspective of a theology of the Word. The ultimate cure for sickness will only be found when humankind comes to terms with the nature and reality of sin and its implications for the human soul.

Human estrangement under the power of sin, however, is just one aspect of the Biblical understanding of human

<sup>7</sup>Thurneysen, op. cit., p. 63.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 221.

life. For God's grace is always available to those who recognize their condition and repent, asking God for forgiveness. The healing power of the Spirit is present to those who call upon the name of the Lord. In Jesus Christ, the image of God within man that was distorted and all but destroyed by the Fall has been restored in the outpouring of grace. Faith is the power that grace bestows upon us to overcome the bondage of sin. Thurneysen writes,

On the other hand, we must maintain the 'nevertheless' of grace for the deliverance and healing of man estranged and torn by sin. We must under no circumstances give him up, not even when it comes to the worst case, for we know that the root of sin is undercut by forgiveness.<sup>9</sup>

The knowledge base of pastoral care is a theology of the Word. Statements about human nature and human behavior are derived from a Biblical understanding of sin and the power of God's grace. The dynamics of sin and grace, however, are not the dynamics that a psychiatrist points to when speaking about neurosis of human pathology. A theological understanding of sin cannot be reduced to a psychological conception of estrangement; nor can a doctrine of grace be reduced to a humanistic understanding of healing and health. There is no common ground between theology and other disciplines. But Thurneysen's refusal to dialogue with the human sciences has, in effect, locked him into a rather rigid and limited conception of the human sciences,

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<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 232.

especially at a time when many humanistic models of human behavior are more open and responsive to insights coming from theology.

For example, Thurneysen accepts, rather uncritically, the Freudian psychoanalytic model of human behavior as if it were the only model available in the whole field of psychiatry and psychology. Yet it is the Freudian psycho-biological orientation that is now being called into question by newer models of human growth and development in such fields as social psychiatry and social psychology. Even traditional psychiatry is beginning to recognize the importance of the "social" and the "interpersonal" in the dynamics of human behavior.<sup>10</sup>

Harry Stack Sullivan has now developed a new viewpoint called the interpersonal theory of psychiatry.<sup>11</sup>

Psychiatric social workers stress the importance of socio-therapy and the need for intervention into the social systems that influence the total way of life of the client. The causes of illness are no longer viewed solely from the older "disease model" of psychiatry but from models which focus upon communication patterns,

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<sup>10</sup>For an excellent discussion of this transition in the field of psychiatry from a psycho-biological to a social perspective see the following books: Maxwell Jones, Social Psychiatry in Practice (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1968); Jürgen Ruesch and Gregory Bateson, Communication: The Social Matrix of Psychiatry (New York, W.W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1968); and Noel Timms, A Sociological Approach to Social Problems (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964).

<sup>11</sup>See Harry Stack Sullivan, The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry (New York, W.W. Norton Co., Inc., 1953).

social functioning, roles, and interpersonal relationships. Significant aspects of human behavior are the result of interaction in social units larger than the individual such as the family, the peer group, and the overall environment of the community. Maxwell Jones writes in Social Psychiatry,

The psychoanalytical model with its preoccupation with conflicts as it were within the individual and its stress upon a two-person treatment relationship, must be complemented by a much greater understanding of group dynamics, social therapy, and of social organization generally.<sup>12</sup>

The knowledge base that is presented in A Theology of Pastoral Care casts little light on the social dimensions of sin and grace. Thurneysen has formulated a theological anthropology without a social context. Yet the scope of the Word of God as manifested in Jesus Christ is far broader than the individual alone. The whole world lies in bondage to the principalities and the powers. "For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22). It is the whole of creation that has been groaning in travail waiting to be "set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21-22). God's Word in Jesus Christ is directed against every rule, authority, power, and dominion which stands in the way of the fullness of him who "fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:20-23). God works in Christ to "uphold the universe by his word of power"

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<sup>12</sup>Maxwell Jones, Social Psychiatry in Practice, op. cit., p. 9.



(Hebrews 1:13). His plan for the fullness of time is "to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth" (Ephesians 1:9-10). Thurneysen has failed to articulate the full scope and implications of a theology of the Word.

Thurneysen has perhaps been more influenced by the psychoanalytic model which he has refuted, than he cares to admit. The emphasis he places on the individual as the sole object of pastoral care suggests that the author has been more influenced by Freudian psychiatry than he has been by a theology of the Word. Had Thurneysen developed a theology of pastoral care that was more open to insights from models of the human sciences, he himself might have been more cognizant of newer models of human behavior that stress and focus on the social context of human estrangement and reconciliation. In turn, he might have become more sensitive to the social dimensions of sin and grace and to the social implications of a theology of the Word that is for the world. Thurneysen presents a doctrine of sin and grace that is applicable to the personal dimension of human existence but which fails to express the community-wide dimensions of these forces. Paul Tillich writes in Systematic Theology,

No personal being exists without communal being. There is no person without encounter with other persons. Persons can grow only in the communion of personal encounter.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, I (Digswell Place, James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 176.

## The Practice of Pastoral Care

Pastoral care is an extension of the Word of God but the connection that Thurneysen establishes between the Word and private conversation restricts the practice of pastoral ministry to the medium of conversation and fails to do justice to the full impact of a ministry of word and deed.

Thurneysen describes pastoral care as the "specific communication to the individual of the message proclaimed in general (i.e. to all) in the sermon to the congregation."<sup>14</sup> The content of pastoral care is the proclamation of the Gospel that can be heard in the context of the Sunday sermon. The words of the sermon, however, are not always heard by those straying from the fold. The message of the sermon needs to be reinforced in private conversation and on an individual basis. Pastoral care is the opportunity to re-emphasize in private and intimate dialogue the Word otherwise spoken from the pulpit. What the sermon cannot accomplish in an ordinary way, pastoral care must supplement in an extraordinary way through the medium of the spoken word. Thurneysen writes,

Our first affirmation is that pastoral care so established and required is accomplished in the form of a conversation. This form is not accidental, but constitutes the very nature of this means. It is conversation both formerly and materially.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Thurneysen, op. cit., p. 15.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

Is private conversation the only way of expressing pastoral care in faithfulness to a theology of the Word? Thurneysen's theory presupposes a close linkage between the Word of God, preaching, private conversation, and pastoral care. Stated as a formula the relationship might appear as follows: The Word=preaching=intimate private conversation=care. One must question, however, whether the Word of God that is revealed in the Gospel can be reduced and restricted to the medium of conversation alone. Does not the Word of God demand more than "table talk" or is the spoken word the logical extension of God's Word? Hiltner raises the same concern in

Theological Dynamics,

Since the prophets and Jesus and Paul all spoke up, it is very easy to interpret literal speaking up as if it were the Word of God. Eduard Thurneysen, of Switzerland, relying on Karl Barth, for instance, has written about pastoral care as if its essence were appropriate preaching by the pastor to individual persons after he has heard their story...in his theory, he seems so much focused on what the minister says when the Word of God is to be brought forth that he seems to confuse the Word of God with what the pastor says.<sup>16</sup>

But the Word of God is what God does in the world to bring human life to fulfillment. In the context of the Gospel narrative God's Word is God's Deed -- it is the Word spoken and performed; heard and fulfilled (Jeremiah 1:12). The Gospel makes no clear distinction between the speaking of words and the doing of deeds.

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<sup>16</sup>Seward Hiltner, Theological Dynamics (New York, Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 174.

Professor J.D.A. Macnicol, in the  
Scottish Journal of Theology writes,

The main theme of this paper is that, whereas in general, Greek thought sharply distinguishes and indeed opposes the notion of 'word' and the notion of 'act', the thought of the Old Testament so closely associates the two that it can use one word for both...<sup>17</sup>

God's Word is what God does in Jesus Christ to redeem humankind from bondage. "The Word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Hebrews 4:12). Pastoral care in response to the Word of God is a ministry of word and deed. "Be doers of the Word, not just hearers only, deceiving yourselves" (James 1:22). Christian ministry is doing the will of God that God wills to be done in fulfillment of the Word. The Word of God has an aim, intention and goal; it is encountered in the power of the Spirit and expressed in the fullness of life.

Pastoral care, in response to God's active Word cannot be restricted to the medium of private conversation. The dynamic power of God's Word calls us into a ministry of love, service, sacrifice, and the doing of deeds as well. The Word of God is directed to all the problems which stand in the way of human fulfillment. Pastoral care is a problem-solving ministry when problem-solving is undertaken in response to God's Word. Thurneysen's over-emphasis of the spoken word resembles

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<sup>17</sup>J.D.A. Macnicol, "Word and Deed in the New Testament," Scottish Journal of Theology, V, 3 (September, 1972), p. 237.



far more the romantic tendency to deify the power of speech than a Biblically based theology of the Word.

### The Theological Framework of Pastoral Care

Thurneysen describes pastoral care as a ministry in witness to the Word of God for people who have fallen away from the community of the Christian Church. The Word of God is spoken and heard in the context of the Church; after first being manifested in Jesus Christ it is now embodied in the proclamation and sacraments of the witnessing community of faith. The goal of pastoral care is to ensure that the whole community grows and matures in disciplined unity around the Word. Seelsorge (the cure of souls) is the secondary and non-sacramental means of binding members of the Church into organic unity with Christ. The theological framework of Thurneysen's theory of pastoral ministry is constructed out of an understanding of God's Word that is heard and encountered within the domain of the institutional Church.

Thurneysen describes the church as the "spiritual realm" in the world where the "special conversation" of pastoral care takes place.<sup>18</sup> The Church is portrayed as a sacred enclave or province within an otherwise estranged society where people can bring their confessions of faith

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<sup>18</sup>Thurneysen, op. cit., p. 107.



and receive the forgiveness of Jesus Christ.<sup>19</sup> The task of pastoral care is to enable and ensure that people do hear the Word and receive the sacraments that have been entrusted to the Church. In effect, the Church becomes the locus and center of God's acts of redemption in the world. Pastoral care is an act of ministry which brings those outside the Church back into the fold in order to repent and receive God's grace.

Thurneysen discovers in the Reformation concept of church discipline a normative framework for shaping and guiding the practice of Seelsorge. Both Luther and Calvin recognized the need for discipline as a way of "gathering and binding" members each to the other and "engrafting" them into the body of Christ. Pastoral care is an extension of the Word by means of church discipline. Thurneysen uses the analogy of a marching army moving "not as a wild, unordered rabble, but in rank and file" to describe the goal of pastoral care.<sup>20</sup> Often quoting from John Calvin, Thurneysen states that the purpose of pastoral ministry is to bind members together, like the ligaments of the body. Thurneysen writes,

We have proposed the term 'pastoral care' for this aspect of church life. Or rather, we have defined and interpreted the concept of 'pastoral care' by the concept of 'church discipline'. It is obvious that the latter is more comprehensive. Not all that is to be understood under church discipline

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., p. 156.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid., p. 48.

is described by the words 'pastoral care'. But church discipline indicates the context in which pastoral care can meaningfully be carried on. We took the definition of this context because the concept of pastoral care was at first somewhat vague and undefined.<sup>21</sup>

Thurneysen has presented a church-centered theological framework for understanding the nature and purpose of pastoral ministry. So presented, the Church becomes the focus of pastoral care because it is the place where the Word of God is encountered in the fullness of its power through the preaching of the good news and the celebration of the sacraments and thus the goal and objective of church discipline. By describing pastoral care as church discipline, ministry can only be viewed as a process of upbuilding the visible community of the institutional Church.

The danger of this position is that it fails to do justice to the role of the Church as an instrument in God's redemptive plan for the world. Thurneysen seems to assume that the Church is an end for itself and thus that pastoral care exists for the purpose of upbuilding the Church as an organization. But is this a correct and adequate theological assumption? Does the Christian Church exist for itself or is the Church set in the world as a means to a larger purpose? Can the goal of pastoral care be to engraft people into the Church if the Church's primary function is to be of service to others? Where does pastoral care happen; within the

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., p. 50.

locus of the Church or along the Jericho Road of life? What implications can be derived from the parable of the Good Samaritan? Does Thurneysen's theological framework do justice to the dynamics of the Word, the mission of the Church, and the function of pastoral care?

God's Word is God's mighty deeds in the midst of human history. The Word is what God does to bring human life to fulfillment. The Word of God is not a static message but a dynamic power that is helping to transform the totality of human life as it is lived in the world; it is a Word revealed in the form of word and deed. The Church exists as a vehicle for the fulfillment of the Word. The Church is not an end in itself but a means to a larger end in God's redemptive plan for the world. Its purpose is not to fill pews but to fulfill human need wherever and whenever problems develop along the Jericho Road. Pastoral care, in response to God's active Word, is a dynamic ministry of word and deed.

Thurneysen's theological framework removes pastoral care from the context of God's mission to and for the World. It suggests that the object of pastoral care is to draw people away from the world into the Church, rather than to send people out in mission and service to the world. But the Word of God itself loses its dynamic power when the Church loses its perspective as an instrument in God's total plan for creation. As method and system, A Theology of Pastoral Care is not an

adequate framework for a pastoral theology that is sensitive to the social context of pastoral care in a Church that exists for others and for the world.

## Chapter 11

Thomas Oden: A Theology of the Secular

Thomas Oden's Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy offers another point of departure for pastoral theology.<sup>1</sup> Oden wants a lively and hard-headed dialogue to take place between theology and psychotherapy and regrets the absence of this kind of encounter in contemporary literature on pastoral care. The reason, he points out, is the sharp division which has emerged between the practical and the systematic methods of doing theology. On the one hand, pastoral theology has been reduced to a study of operations and functions in practice at the neglect of a consistent theological perspective. On the other hand, many systematic theologians have been unwilling to deal with the practical implications of their statements. The result has been that practice theories have been developed without a normative framework.

Oden's theology of the "saeculum" attempts to provide this normative framework for the practice of pastoral care. It begins with a Christological exegesis of the whole healing process. Here, Oden believes, is the basis for a theology which is practical and which encourages a dialogue with psychotherapy. Oden would like to bridge the gap that Edward Thurneysen,

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<sup>1</sup>See Thomas Oden, Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1967).



for example, has created by separating a theology of the Word and psychotherapy into two distinctive realms. But whether he succeeds in establishing the foundation and framework for a genuine dialogue must be considered in greater detail.

### The Methodology of Pastoral Theology

Oden stresses the importance of dialogue but his own method of correlation would appear to prevent anything but one-way conversation. At the outset he rules out any methodology that begins with philosophy or the human sciences. According to Oden, pastoral theology must start from the perspective of God's revelation in the world. It is not man's questions about the human condition but God's questions to human-kind which sets the stage for pastoral reflection. Knowledge about what it takes to make and keep human life fully human is discovered in God's self-disclosure through Jesus Christ. Dialogue with the human sciences begins with revelation.

Paul Tillich's method of correlating human questions with theological answers is from Oden's point of view a non-dialogical process. According to Tillich, theology begins with the human questions, with man's understanding of his own existential condition that comes from an initial familiarity with philosophy and the human sciences. Only after the human questions have been raised and examined can they be correlated with the religious symbols and doctrines of the Christian faith. The questions

give form but not substance to the content of the theological answers. Oden, however, rejects the correlation method for not giving theology its full voice. He writes,

If the conversation with therapy is to transcend a one-way monologue in which psychology frames the questions for theology to answer, theology must not become captive to a theological method whose hermeneutic already predisposes it against the questions framed by God's own self disclosure.<sup>2</sup>

God takes the initiative in formulating the questions that need to be asked about the human situation and what it takes to bring human life to fulfillment.

In other words, Oden rules out the initial role of philosophy and the human sciences in setting the stage for theological reflection. Whereas Tillich utilizes philosophy and the human sciences for purposes of a preliminary existential analysis of human problem situations, Oden begins with a confessional stance. He dismisses Tillich's method of correlation as an attempt to establish an understanding of human behavior prior to divine revelation. Pastoral theology cannot depend on the human sciences to prepare the groundwork for theological reflection about sickness and health. Oden does acknowledge that pastoral care can make use of psychological insights and techniques to guide practice and his whole approach to pastoral ministry has been significantly influenced by client-centered therapy.

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 59.

He does not wish to follow Thurneysen in creating a rigid dichotomy between theology and psychotherapy. But in rejecting Tillich's method of correlation, and any correlation of perspectives with the human sciences for the doing of theology, it is difficult for the reader to see how Oden can still talk about dialogue. Genuine dialogue between theology and the human sciences would presuppose two-way conversation, the sharing of insights from different perspectives, and cross-fertilization of ideas. Oden's method of correlation is basically a one-way street, for genuine knowledge about the human condition always begins with revelation.

Oden uses the doctrine of *analogia fidei* as a working principle for doing pastoral theology. He argues that we must begin from analogies of faith in order to speak concretely about God's work of healing in the world. Without the principle of analogy there is no possibility of speaking about Christ's presence in the midst of human relationships. Oden turns to Barth's Church Dogmatics as the source and framework for understanding this methodological principle. Here Barth has contrasted the analogy of faith with the analogy of being. The *analogia entis* presumes a common ground and point of connection between God and man, on the basis of which, statements about God and God's activity in the world are made. Analogies drawn from human experience become the starting point for understanding our experiences with

God. To this principle Barth has given an emphatic No! For Barth, the only possibility for analogy is the *analogia fidei*; or in other words, analogies which begin with our experience of God first and foremost. Only through revelation from God can theological statements be made. Authentic knowledge is established from Above and conferred upon humankind as an event. God's gracious initiative through faith is the basis of understanding all experience.

From the perspective of the principle of *analogia fidei*, Oden criticizes Thurneysen's principle of "verbum alienum" as well as the principle of "linkage" found in process theology. Thurneysen juxtaposes the Word of God to the words of men in such radical disjunction as to deny the very possibility of analogies between theology and psychotherapy. In sharp contrast, process theology argues that analogies from human experience can be the basis for understanding God and the nature of salvation because of the inherent linkage between the "micro" and the "macro" in all of creation.<sup>3</sup> Oden rejects both working principles and tries to take the middle ground. He argues that Christological analogies are possible between theology and psychotherapy, thus challenging Thurneysen's argument that theology of the Word is

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<sup>3</sup> An excellent discussion of process theology is found in the following source: Delwin Brown, Ralph James, Jr., and Gene Reeves, Process Philosophy and Christian Thought (New York, The Bobbs-Merrill and Company, Inc., 1971), pp. 29ff.

toto genere from psychotherapy. On the other hand, Oden will not go so far as to accept the principle of linkage because the principle removes the disjuncture which does exist between God and man, when one starts from human experience in the doing of theology. Writes Oden,

the most illuminating analogy proceeds from the self-disclosure of God to human self-disclosure, from divine empathy, congruence, and acceptance to human empathy, congruence, and acceptance.<sup>4</sup>

The problem with the doctrine of *analogia fidei* as a working principle is that it allows for no possibilities of using insights from experience or from the human sciences in doing pastoral theology. The human sciences in general and psychotherapy in particular have no role in helping to establish the normative framework for what it takes to make and keep human life fully human. Insights gained when reflecting upon experience are of little importance to the theological task. Immediate human experience is less important than historical creed and dogma in pastoral theology. Practical theology becomes the application of dogmatic theology to practice. And although Oden affirms the importance of open dialogue it is always in the direction of a one-way street, beginning with revelation. Pastoral theology is only diminished in perspective when it turns its back on insights drawn from the human sciences; and without mutual acknowledgement of common ground,

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<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 133.



there is very little basis for genuine two-way dialogue between psychotherapy and theology.

### The Knowledge Base of Pastoral Theology

The knowledge base of Oden's theory is derived from a Christological exegesis of reality. Oden develops what he calls a theology of the "saeculum" drawing upon Dietrich Bonhoeffer's theology of religionless Christianity and Teilhard de Chardin's theories of universal Christological humanism. Christ-centered exegesis is the basis for our understanding of human nature, human behavior, and social change. The limits and possibilities of pastoral care begins with an understanding of God's revelation in Jesus Christ.

Bonhoeffer's concept of "concrete formation" is a pivotal construct in Oden's pastoral theology. The love of God in Jesus Christ manifests itself and takes concrete form in the midst of human relationships. The worldly formation of Christ's incarnational presence is the point of reference for understanding what it takes to make and keep human life fully human in the world. Healing takes place when human relationships are conformed into the love of Christ and each individual self reformed in this encounter. All genuine knowledge about human behavior is revealed in Christ's concrete formation within the context of relationships. Oden quotes from Bonhoeffer's Ethics saying, "Whoever sees Jesus Christ does indeed see God and the world in one. He can hence forward no longer see God without the

world or the world without God."<sup>5</sup>

Oden integrates Bonhoeffer's construct of concrete formation with Teilhard's theory of Christocentric naturalism to speak of Christ's concrete formation within all structures of reality. Teilhard's theology emphasizes the living incarnational presence of Jesus Christ in both the human and natural world; in fact, within the whole of creation. The mystical presence of Christ can be experienced in the "microcosm and macrocosm, in intimacy and vastness, not only in personal history but in natural history."<sup>6</sup> Teilhard has sometimes been called the sacramental scientist because his Christological vision encompasses the whole of life; echoing the cosmic hymn of Colossians 1:15-17, where the Bible speaks of "all things...created through Him and for Him" and that "in Him all things hold together." Oden concludes that God's love in Christ is the "hidden cement" or "cosmic adhesive" undergirding all experience of love and acceptance, and thus the basis of healing whether encountered in pastoral care or psychotherapy.

The knowledge base which Oden presents in Contemporary Theology and Psychotherapy begins and ends with Christological exegesis. It is a confessional approach to the understanding of human nature and human behavior. Insights from the human sciences are not significant

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 47.

in formulating a perspective about what it takes to make and keep human life human in the world. Genuine knowledge about the world is derived from a theology of the saeculum that begins with God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Between revelation and reason there is no common ground, no points of congruence that would make possible the sharing of insights from different perspectives, theological and secular. Unlike social work theory and its knowledge base which has been developed from an interdisciplinary approach, incorporating into its perspective many different frameworks of thought, Oden's theology of the saeculum remains a closed system within the field of dogmatic theology.

#### Pastoral Care in Practice

Pastoral care is the practice of mediating an acceptance "rooted in reality itself." It is a process of embodying within an interpersonal relationship the forces of unconditional love present within the very structures of being. Oden speaks of the "hidden structure of grace" and of the "hidden matrix of divine agape." Without being grounded in the ontological structures of divine acceptance, therapy simply does not work. Writes Oden,

the therapist relies upon the healing force already at work in life itself, when he mediates an acceptance that is not finally his own personal act but a representative ministry on behalf of an acceptance in reality itself.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 96.

Psychotherapy, that is effective, is a process of mediating the universal love of Christ incarnate within the structures of all creation. Therapy is the visible embodiment of "the hidden structure of grace" and "the hidden matrix of divine agape."<sup>8</sup> The love and unconditional positive regard that characterizes the relationship between the therapist and client can only be grounded and nourished in the hidden structure of God's grace. The love and grace may be hidden from recognition and Christ's embodiment may be "incognito" but it is nonetheless real and present in effective psychotherapy. God's unconditional love is the ontological ground of human acceptance and the ontological framework which makes client-centered therapy possible. Writes Oden,

The heart of our answer is that effective psychotherapy mediates and embodies the unconditional acceptance and understanding love present in being itself, which Christian proclamation announces as a once-for-all event in Jesus Christ. Without this mediation and embodiment, psychotherapy simply does not work.<sup>9</sup>

In other words, effective psychotherapy implicitly mediates the divine love that is explicitly proclaimed in the Gospel. There is a Christological framework surrounding all successful healing. The therapeutic process would not work at all unless it was grounded in the hidden structure of divine grace. This structure is implicitly affirmed whether the therapist chooses

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 97.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

to recognize and acknowledge it or not. The psychotherapist is in effect mediating the same love and unconditional acceptance that is the basis of Christian proclamation and the good news of the Gospel. Christ is the center of human existence and the power behind all healing; his presence, either incognito or fully manifest, is what makes successful therapy possible.

Mediation is successful, according to Oden, to the extent that the therapist is able to become transparent to the hidden forces of divine grace. The therapist does not attempt to control, direct, or manipulate the healing forces, rather he enters the relationship in the faith that the presence of love and unconditional acceptance will act to release the inner potential for self actualization. Therapy does not need to be directive; rather it can be most successful when it is non-directive, forsaking us so that we might discover ourselves. Non-directive mediation is itself an act of faith in the healing power of grace and acceptance within the structure of all creation. The therapist simply tries to create an atmosphere of empathetic understanding, unconditional positive regard, and acceptance relying upon the cosmic presence of agape to do the rest. If God's love were not present in the midst of human relationships, non-directive psychotherapy would be an act of despair. In faith, however, therapy becomes an act of mediating the presence of Christ's worldly formation through the power of



acceptance.

Oden has presented an ontological analysis of being in relationship to the practice of therapy and pastoral care. He describes practice theory in a way that focuses upon the mediation of love through the act of acceptance. But Oden's ontological analysis of love and acceptance is misleading to the extent that it fails to bring to attention the ontological and existential interrelationship between love, power, and justice. Is the mediation of love and acceptance all that is involved in the practice of pastoral care within the context of community life? One would like to hear from Oden more discussion about the ontological dimensions of power and justice and the implications for pastoral ministry.

For example, Paul Tillich has written in Love, Power, and Justice that,

One cannot work constructively in theology or philosophy without encountering at every step the concepts...love, power, and justice. Each of the three concepts in itself and all three in their relation to each other are universally significant.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas Oden moves far too easily from an ontology of acceptance to a theory of non-directive psychotherapy without facing the hard realities of power and injustice within interpersonal relationships and society at large. Therapeutic acceptance that ignores the dehumanizing effects of social injustice is not the mediation of Christian love as agape. An act of acceptance where

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<sup>10</sup> Paul Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice (London, Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 1.

there is an imbalance of power and serious injustice is nothing more than surrender and submission. Black men and women cannot be asked to accept the conditions of racism and apartheid in the name of Christian love. Therapy must involve more than acceptance and the expression of feelings when confronted with a problem-situation involving the dynamics of social power and injustice. One major weakness in Oden's practice theory is that it fails to come to terms with the implications of power and justice within society for the practice of pastoral care and the mediation of Christian love. Rollo May has made the same kind of criticism about client-centered therapy, in general, in his book Psychology and The Human Dilemma. He writes,

I believe...that one of the weaknesses of Carl Roger's system of therapy is his underplaying of the negative aspect of will. For example, in the practice of 'congruence' I find a tendency to cover over the emotional differences between patient and therapist, to limit the variety and depth of affects dealt with in therapy, to underestimate anger, hostility, and conflict. The patient experiences his identity standing against as well as with the therapist, and covering over the negative elements makes this harder for the patient. But is not respect best and most profoundly shown by openly admitting anger, hostility, and conflict with another, but at the same time not withdrawing one whit from the relationship?<sup>11</sup>

Pastoral care is the mediation of God's love in the world of human relationships. But the mediation of love can never be isolated from the social dynamics of power and justice. Oden's ontology of acceptance

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<sup>11</sup>Rollo May, Psychology and the Human Dilemma (New York, D. Van Nostrand Company, 1967), p. 216.

can only be adequate to the needs of pastoral ministry within the context of a theological understanding of how love becomes fully manifest and expressed within society at large; a society of complex inequities and social abuses. In other words, pastoral care as the mediation of Christian love may require other forms of intervention and problem-solving than merely the expression of acceptance to individuals in need. The mediation of Christian love is a response to God's plan to bring human life to fulfillment in the fullness of its scope and healing power. If an ontology of acceptance fails to do justice to the demands of this kind of total response, another model for pastoral ministry is perhaps necessary. Christian love is always expressed in a social context, it is love that breaks into the fabric of human relationships and the structures of all forms of social organization. Any method for pastoral care is only adequate to the extent that it allows for the full and total expression of this kind of love.

#### A Theological Framework

According to Oden, the context of pastoral care is the world at large. God acts in the world, not just within the structures of the institutional church. Echoing Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Oden writes that one can never experience "the reality of God without the reality of the world or the reality of the world without the reality of God."<sup>12</sup> The overall framework of pastoral

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<sup>12</sup>Oden, op. cit., p. 18.

ministry is not God's relationship to the Church but God's primary relationship to the world. Christ's worldly formation manifests itself at the center of all creation; it is universal in scope and dimension. The context of pastoral care cannot be circumscribed to the setting of the institutional church. God is in Christ reconciling the whole world (kosmos) to himself (II Corinthians 5:19). Oden writes,

The worldly implications of God's love would not come as such a surprise to us were it not for the strong pietistic predisposition which has taught us that God acts essentially within the church and not in the world, that he is present essentially in the converted community but not among the ungodly.<sup>13</sup>

The Church is an important dimension of the theological framework which shapes the practice of pastoral ministry. But the Church exists as a servant in the world and for the world. The Church's mission is to point out and clarify the true meaning of worldliness and what it means to live authentically in the midst of the secular. Pastoral care is not for purposes of drawing men and women away from involvement in the world. Pastoral care is by definition service in the world on behalf of the world. The Church's life points away from itself and towards the world where Christ's concrete formation is being manifested.

The theological framework of Oden's theory has rightfully stressed the primary relationship that exists between God and the World. Oden has helped us to see that God is Lord and sovereign over all creation and

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<sup>13</sup>Ibid., p. 125.

not just a residential deity of the temple. He has shown that the Church does not exist as an end in itself but only as a means to an end in God's redemptive plan for the world. He has set the practice of pastoral care in the world at large recognizing that all ministry has a broad social context. He has asked some of the essential questions of Christian care: Where is God at work in the midst of human suffering, and where is Christ calling to us in the world? This world-oriented theological framework is a welcomed contrast to Thurneysen's theology of the Word expressed in the context of church discipline. The strength of Oden's theological framework is that it has presented in a new light the relationship that exists between God, World, and Church, with an emphasis on the World. The weakness of this framework, however, is a methodology that will not allow for genuine dialogue between theology and other world-centered systems of human thought. Oden describes his theory as a theology of the secular and calls for new dialogue between theology and the human sciences, in particular the discipline of psychotherapy. But in the final analysis, it is difficult to see how authentic two-way dialogue can take place within a methodological framework that is a one-way street. We turn now to the writings of Seward Hiltner to discover where such a methodology might be found.



## Chapter 12

Seward Hiltner: An Operation-Centered Theology

Seward Hiltner is one of the major theoreticians of pastoral theology and pastoral counseling. His articles have appeared in journals of counseling and psychotherapy and his books include: Pastoral Counseling, Preface to Pastoral Theology, The Christian Shepherd, and Theological Dynamics.<sup>1</sup> It would not be an overstatement to say that during his lifetime he was one of the leading advocates for pastoral counseling and clinical pastoral education in America.

Hiltner's approach to pastoral theology provides an important contrast to Thurneysen's Theology of Pastoral Care. Hiltner is an empirical theologian in the Whiteheadian tradition and he begins at the other end of the theological spectrum. His approach reflects the pragmatic disposition of American philosophy (Dewey, Pierce, James) and the practical orientation of the early American pioneer church. Hiltner is more concerned with "how" things get done than he is in providing the authoritative Word for doing it. He continually reminds his readers that one only learns by doing.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>For purposes of reference see: Seward Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling (New York, Abingdon Press, 1962); Preface to Pastoral Theology (New York, Abingdon Press, 1954); The Christian Shepherd: Some Aspects of Pastoral Care (New York, Abingdon Press, 1959); Theological Dynamics (New York, Abingdon Press, 1972).

<sup>2</sup>Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, op. cit., p. 65.

## Methodology

Pastoral theology is reflection upon the experiences encountered in pastoral care. The method of pastoral theology is inductive, not deductive; and moves from the specific to the general, from concrete experience to theory. Hiltner describes his method as a "lower-case level" of analysis for it begins with case studies of living human situations. Pastoral reflection starts with the raw data of experience, the interview material. Hiltner sees little value in pastoral theories that have not demonstrated familiarity with the dynamics of concrete counseling situations; a weakness he attributes to Thurneysen's theology of the Word. He writes,

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of the recalled verbatim interview, reported and reflected on, as the basic unit of learning in pastoral care.<sup>3</sup>

Hiltner argues that insight derived from experience is the basis of pastoral theology. He maintains that the knowledge which is gained from practical experience is of the same theological value as knowledge derived from Biblical studies or systematic theology. He also sees the need for an open-ended, two-way dialogue between theology and the human sciences. No theology can fail to take seriously the important contributions of the human sciences to an understanding of what is needed to make and keep human life fully human without being

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<sup>3</sup>Seward Hiltner, "Theology and Pastoral Care in the United States," Pastoral Psychology, XVIII, 178 (November, 1967), p. 18.

diminished in value. Pastoral theology is an action-reflection mode of thought which develops on the basis of dialogue and correlation of insights from a variety of inter-disciplinary perspectives.

Hiltner is critical, however, of Paul Tillich's method of correlation. While Tillich has affirmed the importance of relating existential questions to theological answers, Hiltner argues that this is a one-way street. It is interesting to note that both Hiltner and Thomas Oden criticize Tillich's method from the opposite end of the spectrum. Hiltner concludes that the method is one-way because it only allows systematic theology a role in formulating answers. Oden criticizes the method as one-way because it gives the human sciences too much of a role in formulating the questions. Oden was concerned that the correlation method remains faithful to a Christian understanding of revelation but Hiltner is equally concerned that a correlation method reflects a genuine two-way dialogue in recognition that insights, even of a theological nature, can be found within the perspective of the human sciences.

Instead, Hiltner presents what he calls the "perspectival" method of correlation. The assumption of this approach is that every discipline of thought has one perspective on the truth. Biblical studies, history, systematic theology, philosophy, and different disciplines within the human sciences all contribute to the corporate body of knowledge called pastoral theology. D.D. Williams

makes the same argument in an article for the Journal of Religion entitled, "Truth in Theological Perspective."<sup>4</sup> The premise is that we all view the world around us from a relative, historically conditioned perspective. By recognizing the limits of our own perspective upon truth we can learn to appreciate the importance of other perspectives towards understanding the whole of human experience. Each perspective, including theology, points beyond itself. Since each perspective is finite and limited, no one perspective, not even theology, ought to claim self-sufficiency or develop as a closed system. The test of truth, writes D.D. Williams,

is the capacity of an interpretation of the world to become more inclusive, more coherent, more adequate through a continuing discussion, criticism, and reformulation in contact with other interpretations of the ever widening range of human experience.<sup>5</sup>

Truth, according to Hiltner, is encountered in the process of dialogue and correlation between theology and the human sciences. Theology differs from other perspectives only in that it seeks a broader, more inclusive, and comprehensive perspective about life and its meaning. Hiltner uses the metaphor of the "village green" to symbolize the vast domain of human experience. Each perspective has access to the village green of truth but no one perspective exhausts the totality of the realm of knowledge. The role of theology, concludes Hiltner, is to

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<sup>4</sup>Daniel Day Williams, "Truth in a Theological Perspective," Journal of Religion, XXVIII, 4 (October, 1948), pp. 242-254.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 251.

be "an enterprise of sifting out contributions from various perspectives based on special competencies and slants."<sup>6</sup>

What is the test of truth when two or more differing perspectives are placed side by side? How does one discover a truth that transcends the limits of the different perspectives? Hiltner uses the principle of "coherence" as a way of testing the truth that results when theology and the human sciences enter into a dialogue. For example, the Christian Gospel describes human wholeness with the terms salvation, redemption, reconciliation, and shalom. The human sciences, on the other hand, prefer to speak about health, integration, and equilibrium when describing the dynamics which make human life whole. Hiltner would bracket, for a temporary period, the differing philosophical assumptions which distinguish theology from the human sciences in order to discover what is "common" to each perspective. In this way it is possible to find points of congruence between perspectives despite differing assumptions and values.

The test of coherence allows us to juxtapose a theological conception of salvation with a psychological understanding of human health. The truth of both frames of reference can be established at the points of congruence. Theological insights are valid to the extent that

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<sup>6</sup>Seward Hiltner, Theological Dynamics (New York, Abingdon Press, 1972), p. 184.



they are coherent with insights from the human sciences and vice versa. This principle contains significant implications for the method of pastoral theology. Writes Don Browning in an article entitled, "Analogy, Symbol, and Pastoral Theology" in Pastoral Psychology,

It supplements the principle of verification by internal consistency of the Bible and tradition with the principle of external coherence between the theological circle and the structure of reality discerned by other disciplines.<sup>7</sup>

The principle of coherence or congruence is derived from a theological premise. The premise comes from process theology and Hiltner has often acknowledged his indebtedness to Whiteheadian thought. Process theology posits that there is correspondence and inter-relationship between the micro-dimensions of human existence and the macro-dimensions of the cosmos.

Writes Delwin Brown and Gene Reeves,

The universe...is a vast hierarchy of organisms and non-organic societies of organisms, from microscopic physical events to God, in which there is a high degree of continuity between levels because at every level, existence is constituted by social relationships.<sup>8</sup>

The implication of process theory is that the whole can be discerned in the part, and that the macroscopic can be discerned, by analogy, through the microscopic. Verification at the point of coherence is possible and desirable because the whole world exists in layers of organic interrelatedness and correspondence. This

<sup>7</sup>Don Browning, "Analogy, Symbol, and Pastoral Theology," Pastoral Psychology, XIX, 181 (February, 1968), p. 42.

<sup>8</sup>Delwin Brown, op. cit., p. 29.

ontological reality gives every finite human perspective a claim upon one part of the organic and cosmic whole.

One must question, however, whether Hiltner's method preserves the necessary dialectic between revelation and reason in the quest for theological knowledge, or adequately recognizes the points of discontinuity between theology and the human sciences. Thurneysen's contribution to pastoral theology was his emphasis on the places of discontinuity between a theology of the Word and man's own self-understanding. It is not necessary to agree completely with Thurneysen's position to see the importance of acknowledging some qualitative difference between revelation and human insights. The principle of coherence, if pushed to the extreme, would suspend the inherent tension that exists between revelation and reason. If the Word of God was only valid at the points where there is coherence with the human sciences, we would lose all semblance of a theological perspective about what God is doing in the world to make and keep human life fully human. The value of the principle of coherence is that it recognizes the possibility of congruence between perspectives of differing philosophical assumptions, thus inviting a genuine two-way dialogue between theology and the human sciences for purposes of pastoral care.

#### The Knowledge Base of Pastoral Care

The knowledge base of pastoral care is derived from a correlation of theological dynamics with a medical

conception of sickness and health. Sickness, according to Hiltner, is a psychological and physiological impairment to the total functioning of the human organism. But in contrast to disease, a chemical-physiological impairment, sickness involves the more complex spiritual dimension of human existence. The dynamics of sickness include the theological dimension of sin.

The theological doctrine of sin relates to the dynamics of sickness at the point where human decision-making and choice is involved in healing. In treating most forms of illness as the result of defect, invasion, or distortion, modern medicine has tended to remove the element of decision-making and intentionality from the condition of sickness. This tendency is a mistake, according to Hiltner, because one aspect of sickness is our intentional desire to live in or fall victim to such a condition. The patient who is sick, or mentally ill, or even a victim of Parkinson's disease is not completely a victim of fate or the inexorable laws of nature; there is an element of decision involved in each situation. Sin is an aspect of sickness at the point where human choice can make a difference towards recovery or the continuation of the illness. Often there are secondary gains for the patient who is ill to remain in this condition. Sickness can be an unconscious strategy for dealing with other problems of a more pressing nature. Hiltner writes,

Sin is there and emerges most obviously at the point of failing to exercise the element of control that is possible despite immediate suffering. And from the point of view of healing, the element of decision, while it may be quantitatively small in the causation of the disorder, may be prognostically all important.<sup>9</sup>

Hiltner suggests that only when that dimension of sin, which exists within sickness, is recognized, can healing take place. The forces of healing are released when the patient acknowledges his own complicity or duplicity in the dynamics of illness, or in other words when the patient is convicted of his or her sin. This conviction begins with the feeling of guilt. Guilt is the prelude to repentance because it is the recognition of one's alienation from God and from self. The repentant sinner can be healed when he or she can trust in the power of God's grace to cleanse us of our sins.

Repentance is the fundamental catalyst for recovery. In the act of repentance there is an acceptance of God's grace and a corresponding release of the life forces which drive towards wholeness and health. Hiltner's conception of healing and health is influenced by the "inner-release view of human nature."<sup>10</sup> The inner-release view is an amalgamation of several psychological theories: Freudian drive theory, Otto Rank's theory of the will to power, and Carl Roger's client-centered therapy.

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<sup>9</sup>Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology, op. cit., p. 96.

<sup>10</sup>Hiltner, Pastoral Counseling, op. cit., p. 28.



The premise of this perspective is that there are inherent forces within the human personality which drive human behavior towards self-actualization and fulfillment. The act of repentance is the catalyst that releases these forces.

Hiltner's knowledge base presents a conception of human sickness and health in theological perspective. His analysis, however, is limited to the personal dimensions of human sickness and estrangement. What is missing from Hiltner's theories is a discussion of the social context of sickness and health, sin and salvation. Hiltner's knowledge base is too narrowly circumscribed to the personal dimensions of human life in neglect of the social dimensions of human existence. Sickness and health have a social context because individuals live their lives in the midst of human relationships and in the setting of a community. Hiltner is correct in relating sickness to sin, but sin is embedded within human relationships and within the social structures of society at large. The fulfillment of the self is not just a personal experience; it happens within the context of community life. John Bennett has written a book he calls Social Salvation. He says,

Salvation for the individual must include integration of his personality on a level on which he includes within his own interests the welfare of an ever widening circle of persons and on which he is in right adjustment with God who is his real environment....The test of the rightness of change always depends upon the degree to which social conditions become favorable to the salvation of persons as individuals, not as isolated individuals, but as



individuals in relation with each other.<sup>11</sup>

The limitation of Hiltner's knowledge base is the absence of a sociological perspective: insights from sociology, social psychology, and the social sciences that are relevant to pastoral care. The knowledge base presented draws too exclusively from psychoanalytic thought and Rogerian client-centered therapy. The result is a focus upon individual sickness and health without a corresponding analysis of human estrangement in social context. Such focus, however, cannot be the basis of a comprehensive theory for pastoral care because as Ken Mitchell notes, "pastoral care...concerns itself at almost every turn with the dynamics of affiliation and reciprocation between individual and community, individual and institution."<sup>12</sup>

### Practice

Hiltner's sharp differentiation between the functions of shepherding, organizing, and communicating restricts pastoral care to a one-to-one personal encounter and minimizes the role of the whole church as a healing community.

Hiltner divides the Church's ministry into three functions: shepherding, communicating, and organizing.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>John Bennett, Social Salvation (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 41.

<sup>12</sup>Ken Mitchell, "Paul Tillich's Contribution to Pastoral Care and Counseling," Pastoral Psychology, XIX, 181 (February, 1968), p. 24.

<sup>13</sup>Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology, op. cit., p. 40ff.

Each function is directed to a particular need or concern encountered in the practice of ministry.

Shepherding is a function necessary for those persons in need of tender and solicitious care. Hiltner subdivides the functions of shepherding as follows:

(a) healing -- the restoration of physical or psychological impairment to a functional wholeness; (b) sustaining -- standing by, encouraging, supporting a person in times of crisis; (c) guiding -- the educational process of drawing forth a person's inner strengths. Hiltner describes shepherding as a one-to-one relationship between a counselor and client; a relationship focusing on personal needs.

Communicating and organizing are two other functions of ministry in distinction to the function of shepherding. These functions are needed for different kinds of problems encountered in Christian ministry. Communication involves the proclamation of the Word and the various ways that the Gospel is transmitted within the context of the Church. The functions of communication include (a) learning -- the instruction and assimilation of the unknown through religious education; (b) realizing -- the experience of a new and deeper appreciation of the known as in preaching; and (c) celebrating--- corporate acknowledgement of the known in worship.

Organizing is the third function of ministry. It is a process of building and creating a fellowship and of relating the experience of koinonia to the world

at large. The tasks of organizing include administration, management, and the maintenance of programs for Christian fellowship. The overall program of the church, its small groups, committees, councils, and task forces, are an essential dimension of what is called koinonia. These programs and groups must be organized by persons with such skills.

Hiltner believes that it is important to distinguish the functions of ministry into these three categories: shepherding, communicating, and organizing. The danger of making this distinction, however, is that it minimizes the role of the whole Church as a healing or therapeutic community in the practice of pastoral care. The shepherding perspective suggests that pastoral care is a one-to-one relationship between a pastor and parishioner and oftentimes, a relationship existing outside the context of the Church's life together.

Unfortunately, Hiltner's dichotomy between (a) shepherding, (b) communicating, and (c) organizing was established at a time prior to recent emphasis upon community mental health. The community mental health movement, a phenomena of the 1960's and 70's, has helped to persuade many Christians of the importance of the Church itself as a healing or therapeutic community. The new community mental health movement has advocated that the whole community, no matter where that may be, must accept responsibility for healing and health; the problems cannot be left to the professionals alone.

The community of the Christian Church is particularly suited for this approach to healing because by its very nature it is a priesthood of all believers, each person ministering to the needs of the other. Berkley C.

Hawthorne has written in Pastoral Psychology,

If the resources and power of the churches can be utilized for mental health through education, social concern and mission, then significant results will be realized....Mental health once was seen as a medical problem, now is seen in the contextual sense -- family, community, etc. At this point the Church has and will continue to have a significant contribution to make in community mental health.<sup>14</sup>

Thus, it is the whole church as a therapeutic community that has the most vital contribution to make to Pastoral care. This contribution is not fully expressed in Hiltner's description of shepherding. In fact, recognition of the church's role as a therapeutic community would seem to render as obsolete the three-fold distinction Hiltner makes between shepherding, organizing, and communicating, for all three functions are part of the caring process.

One notes that other branches of Christian ministry, for example, the field of mission, has adopted a more wholistic approach to their tasks. In his book, The Church Inside Out, J.C. Hoekendijk describes mission as a ministry of kerygma, koinonia, and diakonia. The good news of the Gospel must be proclaimed (kerygma), it must be lived out in fellowship (koinonia) and it must

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<sup>14</sup>Berkley C. Hawthorne, "Critical Issues in Developing Pastoral Services and Consultation," Pastoral Psychology, XX, 194 (May, 1969), p. 12.



be demonstrated in humble service (diakonia). Writes Hoekendijk,

These three aspects, kerygma, koinonia, and diakonia should be integrated in our work of evangelism. Only so are our methods of evangelism justified.<sup>15</sup>

Organizing, communicating, and shepherding are really three dimensions of pastoral ministry when directed to human problems in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community situations. The growing realization that the community itself is the context of healing lends new weight to the importance of the Church as a whole in the practice of pastoral care. A problem-solving approach to community ministry demands new ways of integrating the three perspectives and functions of communicating, organizing and shepherding. The Church's strongest assets: its small group life and fellowship, its possibilities for being a therapeutic community in the midst of the broader community of our society, are all dimensions of the healing process that would appear to be minimized in Hiltner's three-fold dichotomy between shepherding, communicating, and organizing.

#### A Theological Framework of Pastoral Care

The overall theological framework of pastoral care is what Hiltner calls the shepherding perspective. Pastoral theology is simply one perspective among many

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<sup>15</sup>J.C. Hoekendijk, The Church Inside Out, trans. by Isaac C. Rottenberg (London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1964), p. 23.



others in the field of theology. It is a frame of reference with a particular focus and function. Writes Hiltner,

Pastoral theology is that branch or field of theological knowledge and inquiry that brings the shepherding perspective to bear upon all the operations and functions of the church and minister, and then draws conclusions of a theological order from reflections on these observations.<sup>16</sup>

What is the shepherding perspective? Hiltner describes the shepherding perspective with two key Biblical metaphors: (1) the shepherd who left the 99 sheep of his fold to go in search for the one lost sheep (Luke 15:37 and Matthew 18:12-13) and the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37). To adopt a shepherding perspective is to view the world through the eyes of the Good Shepherd and the Good Samaritan. It is to focus on the problems and issues encountered in ministry from the perspective of healing. Writes Hiltner,

This is to use the term 'healing' in its general and comprehensive sense, involving the restoration of functional wholeness that has been impaired as to direction or timing. The aim of shepherding is to help the person (or group smaller than the whole fellowship) to move as far in the direction of healing as circumstances permit.<sup>17</sup>

The shepherding perspective is different in nature and function from other theological perspectives. Hiltner divides theology into two kinds of disciplines -- one branch which is logic-centered and one branch which is operation-centered. Biblical, historical, comparative

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<sup>16</sup>Hiltner, Preface to Pastoral Theology, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>17</sup>Hiltner, The Christian Shepherd, op. cit., pp. 19-20.

religions, and systematic theology are logic-centered disciplines; but the shepherding perspective is operation-centered. These disciplines are separated by a different organizing principle. Systematic theology is logic-centered because its statements and doctrines follow logically, one from the other in an interrelated fashion. Biblical studies is organized in a logical mode around the narratives of the Gospel. Pastoral theology, on the other hand, has a different organizing principle; it is operation-centered and focuses upon insights which are drawn from the experience of shepherding. In other words, systematic theology is a logical mode of inquiry whereas the shepherding perspective demands an action-reflection mode.

Thus, Hiltner presents a theological framework that is cut off from the main body of systematic theology. Hiltner's division of theology into logic-centered and operation-centered disciplines drives a wedge between pastoral theology and other branches of systematic theology in general. The shepherding perspective, as an operation-centered discipline, is isolated and detached from the major arena of theological reflection. The division between logic-centered and operation-centered disciplines has the tendency to minimize fruitful dialogue between disciplines with a different organizing principle. In such a climate there is always a danger of using the shepherding perspective as a way of promoting that which is immediately expedient and operationally successful

without awareness of the total theological dimensions of the problems which are at hand.

The shepherding perspective does not provide an overarching theological framework for pastoral care. Any perspective that is divorced from the perspective of systematic theology as its point of reference is in danger of lacking theological substance. Without the full scope of systematic theology one is in no position to ask what God is doing in the world to make and keep human life fully human; and thus to establish the overall context of pastoral care. It is helpful to refer to the metaphors of the Good Shepherd and the Good Samaritan but these metaphors are no substitute for a theology of the Word when seeking to understand the nature and dynamics of a problem situation. Pastoral care begins and ends as a response to what God is doing in the world through Jesus Christ to bring human life to fulfillment. Reflection upon God's action in the world and the implications for a healing ministry is the task of the whole theological enterprise. A shepherding perspective, separated from systematic theology, cannot but fail to provide a comprehensive picture of the context of pastoral care.

Pastoral care requires a theological framework that begins with a theology of the Word. The shepherding perspective does not provide the framework for this kind of comprehensive theological reflection. On the other hand, as we have noted, Eduard Thurneysen's theology

of the Word is also unsatisfactory as a theological framework, for there the Word is described in static fashion with little reference to the dynamic vitality of the Word when expressed in the context of deeds. The task of pastoral theology is to provide a picture of the total context of pastoral care by expressing the Word of God in the fullness of its creative power.

PART V

TOWARDS A NEW THEOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR PASTORAL CARE



## Introduction

A theological framework is a point of reference for guiding the practice of pastoral care. Every expression of Christian ministry is shaped and structured by our understanding of the Gospel and our experience of God's will in our lives. The imperative, purpose, and goals of pastoral ministry emerge from the indicative of God's activity in the world. A theological framework is an expression of what God is doing to keep human life fully human, in relationship to what we are called upon to do in response, within the context of a ministry of care. This framework becomes the normative authority and basis for practice.

As we have seen, Eduard Thurneysen offers one frame of reference with his theology of the Word. However, the understanding presented is too static, too church-centered, and too divorced from the context of God's mighty deeds within history to serve as an adequate framework for pastoral care as a problem-solving ministry. Pastoral care needs a framework which focuses upon the Word as an active dynamic power, working in the world to redeem all life from bondage. On the other hand, Seward Hiltner presents, as an alternative, what he calls the "shepherding perspective." This perspective, however, is devoid of in-depth theological content and substance, and fails to express the total nature and scope of God's intention and concern for the world. Thurneysen's theological framework encourages

a ministry of words without deeds, while Hiltner's perspective encourages good deeds but ones that are divorced from the overall perspective of God's Word.

Pastoral care, understood as a problem-solving ministry -- a ministry of word and deed -- requires a new theological framework. The framework would encompass a theology of the Word, but the Word understood as God's plan for the fullness of time. The Word of God would be described in the totality of its dynamic scope, as God's plan and purpose for all creation -- a plan to be performed, accomplished, and fulfilled now and in the days ahead. The Word of God would be discerned through the eyes of faith within the context of the world; not just as the spoken words heard within the walls of the church. The goal and purpose of the Word would be seen as the redemption of all creation.

The following chapters provide a new theological frame of reference by asking three pivotal questions about the practice of pastoral care: "How?", "Where?" and "Why?". The question "How?" focuses on the problem of method and the way pastoral care is done. How do we communicate the good news of the Gospel and initiate acts of healing in society? What is the relationship between word and deed in pastoral care? Is pastoral care primarily a ministry of the spoken word or is it an action ministry that involves concrete deeds? How are we called upon to respond to the dynamic power of God's Word?

The question "Where?" raises the issue of setting and context. Where in the world does pastoral care occur? Does pastoral care take place in the setting of the Church? Or is the world the setting of God's redemptive plan and therefore the context of ministry? Is the focus of pastoral ministry church-centered or world-centered and what is the relationship between the Church and the World? Where does pastoral care happen in a Church that exists for Others?

Finally, the question "Why?" asks about the purpose and goals of pastoral care. What purpose does pastoral care fulfill in the unfolding of God's redemptive plan in the world? Why is pastoral care necessary? What problems are there in the world that make it imperative for the Church to do pastoral ministry? What is the ultimate goal of pastoral care in relationship to God's plan for human fulfillment?

How? Where? Why? Each question moves us towards a new theological framework for the practice of pastoral care.

## Chapter 13

### Pastoral Care: A Ministry of Word-in-Deed

Pastoral care is one dimension of ministry (diakonia) practiced by members of the whole Church in response to the imperative of the Word of God. A pastoral ministry develops in witness to God's Word-in-Deed by those persons who through faith know that they are called upon to act as healing agents in the world. Pastoral care is a response to the Word of God as it is encountered along the Jericho Road in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community problem situations. When the lawyer asks Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29), Jesus responds by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. The answer of the parable is that our neighbor is any human being who is in need or facing a problem. The parable, however, transforms the question "Who is my neighbor?" into the question "Who are you?" and directs it back to the lawyer. Who are you in times of human distress? Are you like the priest or the Levite? Pastoral care is a problem-solving ministry practiced in response to the Word of God encountered in the midst of human crisis. The direction, purpose, and scope of pastoral ministry is governed by the impetus it receives from its Object and objective: God's Word and its fulfillment.

### The Word of God

The commonest phrase in the Old Testament expressive of divine revelation is the "Word of God." The sentence

"hear the word of the Lord," is a formula, repeated time and again, used to describe God's revelation to the prophets and to the people of Israel. Isaiah 2:1 begins, "the word which Isaiah the son of Amos saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." The prophet Jeremiah speaks in poetic language of the Word being placed in his mouth.

Behold, I have put words in your mouth  
 See, I have set you this day over nations  
 and over Kingdoms,  
 to pluck up and to break down,  
 to destroy and to overthrow  
 to build and to plant.

Jeremiah 1:10

The Old Testament bears witness to the God above all gods who reveals His purpose not through abstract metaphysical ideas or detached mystical experiences but through dramatic acts of liberation and reconciliation in the midst of historical events: The Exodus from Egypt, the conquest of Jerusalem, the return from Babylon. "O my people, remember... what happened from Shittim to Gilgal, that you may know the saving acts of the Lord." God's Word is what God does; it is an active Word that speaks through events in history.

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

The Word of God has dynamic and creative power: "By the Word of the Lord the heavens were made" (Psalms 33:6); it has destructive power: "I have slain them by



the words of my mouth" (Hosea 6:5); and the Word has healing and liberating power: "he sent forth his word, and healed them and delivered them from destruction" (Psalms 107:20). Once spoken the Word of God is charged with vital force and the power to transform human life and the course of human events. The Word is God's Will and it accomplishes what needs to be done to fulfill God's plan for the world. The Word not only expresses an intention but it completes it.

So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth;  
it shall not return to me empty,  
but it shall accomplish that which I purpose,  
and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

Isaiah 55:11

The Old Testament makes no significant distinction between God's Word and God's Deed; between the Word as spoken and done. In Hebrew thought the Word can be an idea, an action, an encounter, or event synonymously. The Word of God is spoken and done as the mighty deeds of God in history. Writes Johs Pedersen in Israel; Life and Culture,

The most ordinary term for 'word' *dābhār*, also implies an action, that which happens, the event with all that it implies (Gen 15,1; 22,20); it is said: make a *dābhār* (Gen. 20,10; 22,16; 44,7).<sup>1</sup>

Later in Greek philosophy and thought the distinction is made between word and deed, thought and action. But this dichotomy is not characteristic of Hebrew thought and Old Testament theology where the Word is encountered as God's mighty deeds making the word and

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<sup>1</sup>Johs Pedersen, Israel, its Life and Culture, I (London, Oxford University Press, 1964), p. 168.

deed two dimensions of the same event. The Word of God is not only spoken but it is performed. "Then the Lord said to me, You have seen well, for I am watching over my word to perform it" (Jeremiah 1:12). Professor J.D.A. Macnicol writes in an article entitled "Word and Deed in the New Testament,"

The main theme of this paper is that, whereas in general Greek thought sharply distinguishes and indeed opposes the notion of 'word' and the notion of 'act', the thought of the Old Testament so closely associates the two that it can use one word for both; and further that while traces of the Greek attitude are certainly to be found in the New Testament, yet it is the O.T. attitude which is dominant.<sup>2</sup>

The Word of God is what God wills to be done in the world and also what the prophets have interpreted that God has done, is doing, and will do in the course of human history. The Word refers both to God's actions and the Story of God's actions from creation to salvation. The Word is the Deed and the testimony to the deed of God's redemptive acts in the world. It is both event and the historical narrative of events, told through the eyes of faith as a confession of faith about God's work of deliverance for those whom He has called to be His chosen people.

A wandering Aramean was my father; and he went down into Egypt and sojourned there, few in number; and there he became a nation, great, mighty, and populous. And the Egyptians treated us harshly, and afflicted us, and laid upon us hard bondage. Then we cried to

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<sup>2</sup>Macnicol, op. cit., p. 237.

the Lord the God of our fathers, and the Lord heard our voice, and saw our affliction, and our toil, and our oppression; and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with great terror, with signs and wonders; and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

Deuteronomy 26:5-9

### The Gospel

The term Gospel is the modern translation of the Anglo-Saxon "god-spell" or story of God and is used as shorthand to designate the story of the New Testament. Gospel renders in English the Greek "euangelion" which means the Word as "good news" or "good tidings". "And the angel said to them, 'Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people...' (Luke 2:10). The Gospel is the Word of God's mighty acts in the life of God's Son Jesus Christ; it is a confessional report about a unique series of historical events, beginning with the announcement that a Messiah was to be born, and reaching a climax in Christ's death and resurrection from the Cross.

Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a man attested to you by God with mighty works and wonders and signs which God did through him in your midst, as you yourselves know...

Acts 2:22

In Jesus Christ the Word, translated as Logos, has become flesh and lived in the world as a man among men. The Word, used by God as the instrument of creation, is now incarnate (in + carno = flesh) in the body of Christ. Jesus not only proclaims the Word -- he

embodies the Word in his life and work -- He is the Word. "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). The culmination of God's redemptive mission to the world has been revealed in the life of this person, one truly God and truly man. "He was manifested in the flesh, vindicated in the Spirit" (I Timothy 3:16). God has participated in the common lot of humanity by allowing Himself to become vulnerable in Jesus to pain and sorrow and finally the agony of the Cross itself. The Incarnate Word has decisively although not conclusively bridged the gulf between essence and existence, the divine and the human in the act of at/one/ment. In the New Testament the Greek logos is more than just a word spoken or an abstract metaphysical concept -- it is God's Word embodied with power and purpose and directed to the fulfillment of God's plan. Incarnation is the complete integration of Word and Deed. Writes Gabriel Fackre,

The marriage of word and deed is consummated in the birth of Jesus Christ. Here the word is made flesh. The converging lines of action and interpretation meet at the incarnation. The Word of God becomes the Deed of God. It is out of this fusion that the ministry of Jesus comes.<sup>3</sup>

The New Word of the Gospel is that a New Age has begun in the life of Jesus. In his work and ministry, time has been fulfilled and the Kingdom of God has already broken into the midst of human history. "Behold

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<sup>3</sup>Gabriel Fackre, Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism (Grand Rapids, William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1957), p. 77.

the Kingdom of God is in the midst of you" (Luke 17:21). God's plan for the fullness of time has been inaugurated in time with the incarnate Word. The signs of this New Age are apparent to all who can see that "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk" (Matthew 11:5). Jesus' words and work bear witness to the inbreaking power of a New Age. "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you" (Matthew 12:28). Bernhard Anderson writes in Rediscovering the Bible,

Jesus' ministry involved more than proclaiming that already the redemptive rule of God was breaking in upon human life. Not only did he preach this good news; he was its 'effective agent.' He was the instrument through whom God was accomplishing his purpose to reclaim and to reshape human life. The reality of God's Redemptive Rule was made manifest in what Jesus was doing, in the effect of his deeds.<sup>4</sup>

The announcement of the Good News greets all of its hearers with a promise and a command. The promise is that a New Age has dawned with power and purpose for human fulfillment. The command is that God's will must be done in the world. "Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done" (Matthew 6:10). The Gospel must be proclaimed and done; it is a call to action. "Time is fulfilled, the Kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the Gospel" (Mark 1:15). The Good News makes an ethical claim upon our lives, it demands that we participate in God's plan for human fulfillment; that

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<sup>4</sup>Bernhard W. Anderson, Rediscovering the Bible (New York, Association Press, 1951), pp. 192-193.



we in turn work to make and keep human life fully human. The Gospel as Word and Will, Power and Purpose contains its own imperative -- we must do the deeds that need to be done to prepare the way for the coming of God's Kingdom. Thus, the keynote of Jesus' own description of his ministry is the call to act in word and deed.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19

### A Ministry of Word-in-Deed

Pastoral care is a ministry of word-in-deed in response to God's Word by those who have been called forth to do God's will. The demand and command of the Gospel is to do the will of the Lord wherever and whenever it needs to be done along the Jericho Road as word-in-deed. "Whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of Lord Jesus" (Colossians 3:17). A ministry of healing is a response to the Word of God made manifest in the life and work of Jesus Christ. God's act of redemption in the Christ-event provides the basic point of departure for every mode and expression of pastoral ministry. St. Paul describes his ministry in just such words,

In Christ Jesus, then I have reason to be proud of my work for God. For I will not venture to speak of anything except what Christ has wrought through me to win obedience from the Gentiles by word and deed, by the power of signs and wonders, by the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15: 17-19

Pastoral care is bringing the Good News of the Gospel to people in problem situations. The evangelist or "euangelion" is the messenger who brings the Good News of God's plan for human fulfillment to those people in need along the Jericho Road of life; a healing act which involves more than speech or verbal communication. One brings the Good News by doing God's will in word and deed or word-in-deed; an action that includes speech, dialogue, action, reflection, confrontation, interaction, and problem-solving.<sup>5</sup> God's Word to the prophet Jeremiah was to "Hear the words of this covenant and do them" (Jeremiah 11:6). When Simon Peter eats with the Risen Lord and says to him, "I love you," Jesus replies, "Feed my lambs" (John 21:15).

Pastoral care is the proclamation of the Good News but the medium includes more than speech. For example, Eduard Thurneysen in A Theology of Pastoral Care defines pastoral ministry as "a specific communication to the individual of the message proclaimed in general (i.e. to all) in the sermon to the congregation."<sup>6</sup> Thurneysen argues that pastoral care is private communication to individuals of the message proclaimed in

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<sup>5</sup>The term "word-in-deed" is taken from the title of Gabriel Fackre's book entitled Word in Deed: Theological Themes in Evangelism. Fackre argues that evangelism is neither a wordless deed or a deedless word but the integration of the two acts as word-in-deed.

<sup>6</sup>Thurneysen, op. cit., p. 15.

public from the pulpit; that care is simply an extension of preaching and admonition. The Good News of the Gospel is translated and transmitted to persons-in-need through intimate conversation. Thurneysen writes,

Our first affirmation is that pastoral care so established and required is accomplished in the form of a conversation. This form is not accidental, but constitutes the very nature of this means. It is conversation both formally and materially.<sup>7</sup>

The basic assumption of Thurneysen's textbook is that the Word of God itself establishes conversation and the spoken word as the medium of pastoral care.

The Word of God proclaimed in the Gospel and as Gospel, however, demands more than just words of conversation. The Word of God is word of what God is doing in the world and demands a total response. The Gospel is the report that the Word has been made flesh in Jesus Christ; an event that completely integrates God's Word and Deed. The New Testament understanding of communication itself is far broader in implications than the modern conception of table talk; genuine communication is a form of dynamic interactions between persons. The Word of God has power and purpose, so much so that the Letter to the Hebrews speaks of Christ "upholding the universe by his word and power" (Hebrews 1:3), and St. Luke proclaims.

And they were all amazed and said to one another, What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out.

Luke 4:36

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<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 102.

In the New Testament a word spoken but unaccompanied by a corresponding deed is often a powerless word -- even one that is deceptive. Jesus says in the Gospel of John,

Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works that these will he do, because I go to the Father.

John 14:12

At the same time Jesus warns his disciples about the people who honor him with their lips, when their heart is far from him (Mark 7:6), and that "not everyone who says to me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matthew 7:21). A healing word is a word that is heard as it is being done in deeds. Pastoral care involves the delicate integration of kerygma and diakonia -- word and deed.

Pastoral care is a ministry of word-in-deed in response to the Good News of the Gospel. A ministry of care involves doing deeds that are interpreted by the Word and speaking words that are empowered by the Deed. The Word sets the deed in theological perspective; the deed enables the Word to become actualized in a concrete living situation. A deed without a word is uninterpreted; a word without a deed is not embodied. Pastoral care as a word-in-deed ministry is that delicate integration of the spoken word with the caring deed in the midst of problem-solving. J. Alan McLean, in a discussion of word-in-deed evangelism provides an unusual but helpful image for understanding the



relationship of word and deed.

Evangelism and epoxy glue have one thing in common: a healing power that works miracles. Epoxy comes in two tubes, one a resin, the other a hardener. When mixed, the two substances take on a new nature suddenly endowed with a capacity to restore cracked dishes, fix broken toys, and even mend metal. Evangelism comes in two tasks -- the verbal witness and the action witness. When mingled...word-in-deed evangelism empowers congregations to heal human hurts and hearts.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible Story is a witness to the power of a healing word spoken in the midst of a caring deed. The people of Israel heard the Word of God in the midst of God's mighty deeds within their history: deeds experienced during the Exodus, the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracles at Sinai and in the Wilderness, and the deliverance into a promised Land. In the New Testament Jesus' own acts of healing set the context for his spoken word. To the blind men whom he heals Jesus proclaims, as he touches their eyes, "According to your faith be it done to you" (Matthew 9:29). Peter and John begin their ministry of the Word in the act of healing the lame beggar outside the Temple gate (Acts 3:1-10).

At times, however, there are valid reasons why explicit communication of the Gospel is not the appropriate mode of pastoral care. Sometimes explicit communication of the Good News stands in the way of healing because the participants involved in the problem are not prepared to hear its message. Hearing the Word often requires a period of silent preparation. No rule of

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<sup>8</sup>Rev. J. Alan McLean, "Epoxy Evangelism," Evangelism for a New Day, V, 1 (Spring, 1977), p. 1.



thumb can be rigidly prescribed as to whether or not pastoral care happens as explicit or implicit communication of God's love; it always depends on the context of the problem. Not to speak directly about the Good News may, at times, itself be an act of faith. Here Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers us a helpful reminder.

Let us ask why it is that precisely in thoroughly grace situations, for instance when I am with someone who has suffered a bereavement, I often decide to adopt a 'penultimate' attitude, particularly when I am dealing with Christians, remaining silent as a sign that I share in the bereaved man's helplessness in the face of such a grievous event, and not speaking the Biblical words of comfort which are, in fact, known to me and available to me. Why am I often unable to open my mouth, when I ought to give expression to the ultimate? And why, instead, do I decide on an expression of thoroughly penultimate human solidarity? Is it from mistrust of the power of the ultimate word? Is it from fear of men? Or is there some good positive reason for such an attitude, namely, that my knowledge of the word, my having it at my finger-tips, in other words my being, so to speak, spiritually master of the situation, bears only the appearance of the ultimate, but is in reality itself something entirely penultimate? Does one not in some cases, by remaining deliberately in the penultimate, perhaps point all the more genuinely to the ultimate, which God will speak in His own time (though indeed even then through a human mouth)? Does not this mean that, over and over again, the penultimate will be what commends itself precisely for the sake of the ultimate, and that it will have to be done not with a heavy conscience but with a clear one? Of course, this question is not concerned only with a particular case. Fundamentally it embraces the whole domain of Christian social life, and especially the whole range of Christian pastoral activity.<sup>9</sup>

#### Problem-Solving: An Action-Reflection, Word-in-Deed Model of Pastoral Care

Problem-solving is an action-reflection model of

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<sup>9</sup>Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Ethics, ed. by Eberhard Bethge (London, S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1971), pp. 103-104.

healing. As a model for pastoral care, problem-solving is an action-reflection, word-in-deed ministry undertaken in response to God's Word heard in the midst of God's Deed. Problem-solving happens as praxis -- the delicate integration of critical reflection and creative action by persons working through a problem situation. Intervention without interpretation is purposeless; interpretation without concrete acts of implementation is idle speculation. Pastoral care as problem-solving is an action-reflection response to God's Word-in-Deed; it is a ministry of healing words spoken and embodied in the midst of caring deeds or acts.

Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed provides a preliminary outline towards understanding change and problem-solving in an action-reflection mode. The central theme of Freire's thesis is that all problem-solving happens as praxis -- reflection and action upon the world in order to change it. Freire believes that genuine change is impossible when a response to human needs or a problem situation is dichotomized between modes of thought and action, understanding, and implementation. Healing demands the delicate balancing of action and reflection. Reflection that suspends or postpones action is always endangered by solipsism, while actions without reflection are aimless. Thus Freire offers the formula; word equals work equals praxis.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, trans. by Myra Bergman Ramos (New York, Herder and Herder, 1971), p. 75.

He continues,

Within the word we find two dimensions, reflection and action, in such radical interaction that if one is sacrificed-- even in part -- the other immediately suffers. There is no true word that is not at the same time a praxis. Thus, to speak a true word is to transform the world.<sup>11</sup>

Freire explains why this delicate balance between word and work is so important.

An unauthentic word, one which is unable to transform reality, results when dichotomy is imposed upon its constitutive elements. When a word is deprived of its dimension of action, reflection automatically suffers as well; and the word is changed into idle chatter, into verbalism.... On the other hand, if action is emphasized exclusively, to the detriment of reflection, the word is converted into activism. The latter -- action for action's sake -- negates the true praxis and makes dialogue impossible.... To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it.<sup>12</sup>

Pastoral care is a process of action and reflection when practiced as a ministry of problem-solving. Problem-solving is first and foremost an activity that one does. In theological perspective, problem-solving is an attempt to participate in God's plan for human fulfillment by removing the obstacles in problem situations which stand in the way of God's will and purpose. Problem-solving is the willingness to do what God has willed to be done to keep human life fully human in the midst of person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community relationships. Human beings learn in the act of doing and problems are resolved through plans that are tested, tried out, and implemented in the arena of concrete

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid., p. 75.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid., pp. 75-76.

experience. The first-fruits of healing are discovered in the act of doing God's will. "If any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God" (John 7:17).

Pastoral care, as a problem-solving process also involves reflection and interpretation. Actions alone cannot resolve problems if there is no interpretation of the problem situation through the Word. The Word is the interpretation which brings the complex facets of a problem into focus. The Word is heard when the problem is understood in a way that prepares the participants for appropriate and purposeful actions. Action without interpretation is aimless. The Word is the act of interpretation which raises the dynamics of the problem to new levels of consciousness and understanding for all persons involved in the problem-situation.

In pastoral care, the Word sets the problem in theological perspective. The Word helps to interpret what God is doing in the world to make and keep human life fully human and what each participant in the problem situation is called upon to do in response to God's action. The Word moves from the perception of God's plan for human fulfillment to the particular variables of the problem situation and back to God's demands. It integrates a variety of social and psychological perspectives into a theology of the Word for the problem. The Word brings the problem into theological focus and



serves as a frame of reference for the on-going efforts at problem-solving.

Hearing and speaking the Word is a fundamental aspect of the problem-solving process for the Word interprets and clarifies three major areas of concern. First, the Word helps us to identify the growth forces and the restraining forces contained in the problem situation. The Word is formulated on the basis of force-field analysis carried out in theological perspective. The aim of force-field analysis is always to identify the constructive and destructive forces in the field; the forces which facilitate growth and the forces which are obstacles to growth. In pastoral care, the Word forces the participants to engage in force-field analysis from the perspective of what God is doing in the world to make all things new and fully human. Under the category of restraining forces, the Word draws our attention to a theological understanding of sin as alienation and dehumanization -- a condition Paul refers to in Romans as "the good that I would I do not, the evil I would not, that I do" (Romans 7:19). The Word also draws attention to the forces of healing and renewal present in every problem situation, no matter how complex and fate-like the dynamics of the problem may be. The Word is sensitive to the power of love (agape) which works in the world through forgiveness and acceptance to drive all that is separated toward reunion.



Second, the Word focuses attention upon the significant relationship or concentric circles of human relationships most directly involved in the problem as it is experienced. It asks from a theological perspective, where is koinonia to be found within the context of this particular problem; in other words who are the people who share this problem in common -- its suffering, pain, and dislocation in the presence of Christ's own suffering love. Recognizing that every problem develops in the midst of a network of inter-dependent relationships, the Word pinpoints those persons who most need to be taken into consideration if the problem is to be resolved. The Word helps to identify both the community of persons in need of care and nurture and the presence of a caring or nurturing community, including God's presence in Jesus Christ wherever people share problems in common and are willing to call upon God's name.

Third, the Word reveals the limits and the possibilities for change within the parameters of the problem situation. Those who hear the Word are reminded that we live between the times; that there are limits to change and yet possibilities for change for those who believe in God's power to make all things new (Revelations 21:5). Illusion is the result of being tempted by the limitless possibilities of infinity; the temptation to regard oneself as a god. Despair is the fear to see any genuine possibilities in a social setting for change;

of failing to do what God has required of us. Problem-solving works when neither illusion or despair control the human personality. Only as people are sensitive to the limits but open to real possibilities does problem solving occur. The words of Reinhold Niebuhr's prayer help us to recognize this situation:

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to distinguish the one from the other.<sup>13</sup>

Problem-solving is an action-reflection model for ministry; a mode of interaction which delicately integrates word and deed in every healing act. Pastoral care develops in response to God's Word encountered along the Jericho Road in the midst of person-to-person, person-in-group, person-in-community problem situations. The Word of God is the Work that God does in the world to make and keep human life fully human; it is a Word-in-Deed. God's Word-in-Deed calls us into a ministry of pastoral care wherever and whenever human problems are discovered. In response to God's Word, pastoral care is practiced as a ministry of word-in-deed; a word that sets the deed in theological perspective and a deed which gives the word power in concrete living situations. Pastoral care uses a problem-solving model to give full expression to the implications of a word-in-deed ministry.

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<sup>13</sup>Hollings, op. cit., p. 50.

## Chapter 14

The Church in the World

In 1963 Colin Williams, then Chairman of the Department on Studies in Evangelism at the World Council of Churches, wrote a popular little book entitled, Where in the World?<sup>1</sup> The book summarized some of the author's reflections upon the articles and position papers that had been presented to the Department as part of a world wide study on "the missionary structure of the congregation," a study authorized at the Third Assembly of the World Council in New Delhi. The title of William's book highlighted the pivotal question motivating the whole study: Where in the world is God asking the Church to be the Church in mission to others? The same question is fundamental in the practice of pastoral care and the articles presented to the Department on Studies in Evangelism have been helpful in clarifying the theological context of all pastoral ministries.

Where does pastoral care take place? Where in the world is Christ calling us to serve the needs of others? Is the setting of the institutional church the primary arena for the practice of pastoral care? Or is it more accurate to say that pastoral ministry takes place in the world and for the world? Where along the Jericho Road are human problems being encountered? What is the

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<sup>1</sup>See Colin Williams, Where in the World? (New York, National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A., 1964).

relationship between the Church and the World and how should this relationship be expressed theologically? These questions and others need to be asked if the overall question, "Where in the world?" is to be answered.

Just as the formula "word-in-deed" has been helpful in understanding "how" pastoral care is practiced; a second formula "the-church-in-the-world" is proposed as a way of expressing where pastoral care happens. This theological formula, however, requires detailed elaboration if it is to be helpful for understanding pastoral ministry. It requires a discussion of the nature and function of the Church; a discussion of the importance and purpose of the world (kosmos, oikoumene) in the totality of God's redemptive plan, and finally an understanding of the relationship between Church and World and the implications for the practice of pastoral care. Each discussion moves us towards a fuller appreciation of where in the world a healing ministry occurs.

### The Nature and Function of the Church

One of the earliest descriptions of the Christian Church is found in Acts 2:42, "They continued in the apostles teaching, fellowship, in the breaking of bread and prayers." Here some of the essential marks of the Church were first identified in their pristine form: the teaching of the Word; gathering together into koinonia; and the celebration of the Sacraments in prayer. Gradually there developed a formula for identifying this community of faith: wherever the Word of God is

truly preached and the sacraments rightly administered. John Calvin used this formula in the Institutes but added the words "and heard" to indicate the role of the congregation in the constitution of a Church. "Wherever we find the Word of God purely preached and heard... there it is not to be doubted, is a Church of God."<sup>2</sup> The Free Church tradition has relied on a looser definition of the Church as a point of identification: "where two or three are gathered together in his name" (Matthew 18:20). Another common definition is the ancient formula, *ubi Christus ibi ecclesia*, where Christ is, there is the Church -- a definition which breaks asunder any complacent institutionalization of the Word and Sacrament.

Paul Minear in Images of the Church in the New Testament identifies over 80 different images in the Gospel that describe the Church and cast light on the nature of Christian community. The Church is like: "the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13); "a letter from Christ" (II Corinthians 2:2-3); "fish and net" (Mark 1:17-18 and Matthew 4:19); "a boat" (Matthew 8:23-27); "an ark" (I Peter 3:18-23); and "unleaven bread" (I Corinthians 5:7), etc.<sup>3</sup> These images are clustered around three major motifs: the Church as (1) the people of God; (2) the new humanity in Jesus Christ; and

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<sup>2</sup>John Calvin, A Compend of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, ed. by Hugh T. Kerr, IV (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1964), p. 155.

<sup>3</sup>Paul S. Minear, Images of the Church in the New Testament (Philadelphia, The Westminster Press, 1960), pp. 28-35ff.



(3) the fellowship of the believers -- each motif expressing one important dimension of the Church's nature. Minear's typology is useful for structuring a discussion of the Church in the context of pastoral care.

The Church, as described in the New Testament, is the people of God, the gathered community of believers, called into existence by God's grace and mercy.

You are God's own people, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were no people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

I Peter 2:9-10

The Greek *ekklesia* means simply, those who are called out or summoned forth by a herald. *Ekklesia* refers to both the act of congregating and the congregated community. The original Hebrew word "qahal" is used to describe the assembled people of God who have been called out from among the nations. The Church is the New Israel, the new community called into covenant relationship with God. The covenant begins with God's call to Abraham: "you shall keep my covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations" (Genesis 17:9), and extends to the formation of the "new covenant" in Jesus Christ (II Corinthians 3:6). As the New Israel the Church acknowledges its historical continuity to the earliest community of faith under God while at the same time recognizing itself as the community of the New; a community whose members have intentionally

gathered in response to God's call in Christ.

Second, the Church is the new creation; the result of a universal and cosmic act of transformation in Jesus Christ. "If anyone is in Christ, he is the new creation, the old has passed away, behold the new has come" (II Corinthians 5:17). The Church is the first fruits (aparchē) of God's redemptive plan in the world. A new community has formed in the presence of Christ. "Here there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian and Scythian, slave, free, but Christ is all and in all" (Colossians 3:11). The life of the Church is a sign of God's purpose and plan for the whole world, a foretaste of the Kingdom which is to come. The Church is not the Kingdom but it does live in the tension between the Already of Christ's presence and the not yet of a Kingdom yet to be fulfilled. It is the "new humanity" (Ephesians 2:14-15), still caught in the birth pangs of labor; the living promise of what God intends one day for all.

Finally the Church is the common life of the faithful who live in community; the web and fabric of human relationships that establishes the structure of koinonia. The early Church was a fellowship of men and women who met in each other's homes, shared common meals, and held what they owned in common (Acts 2:44). All who believed were together. According to St. Paul in his second letter to the Corinthians, "They lived in one another's hearts, they died together"

(II Corinthians 7:3). The Reformation Fathers used the term *communio sanctorum*, communion of saints, to express the community-like nature of the early church and the incumbent responsibilities of each to the other. The responsibilities were those expected from the priesthood of all believers, a concept which, as Robert McAfee Brown explains,

does not mean that 'every man is his own priest.' It means the opposite: 'everyman is priest to every other man.' It does not imply individuality. It necessitates community. Christians are to offer themselves to one another, to pray for one another, to sacrifice themselves on behalf of one another, so that through them all, the high-priesthood of Jesus Christ may be more effectually communicated to them all.<sup>4</sup>

St. Paul himself uses the image of the body to express the interdependent nature of Christian community and the responsibilities of each part to the whole. The predominant characteristic of the human body is that no one of its parts are separated, self-enclosed, or self-sufficient units -- rather that each part of the body is related to and functionally dependent upon the whole. Writes Paul in I Corinthians 12,

As it is, there are many parts, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you,' nor again the head to the feet, 'I have no need of you.' On the contrary, the parts of the body which seem to be weaker are indispensable.

I Corinthians 12:21-22

Just as the human body has many parts each related to whole, so too are men and women joined together into

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<sup>4</sup>Robert McAfee Brown, The Spirit of Protestantism (New York, Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 97.

the body of the Church. When St. Paul writes, "If one member suffers all suffer together" (I Corinthians 12:26), he expresses the corporate nature of the community of faith; a community of people who face pain, suffering, and death as One.

A note of caution must be sounded, however, lest a fundamental tension in every theological discussion of the Church be overlooked. The images that have been presented describe the Christian Church in essence; not necessarily the community of faith that lives under the conditions of existence. This distinction is important for the Church in existence is always imperfect and incomplete; a task yet to be accomplished. Protestant theologians often describe the Church as a community of sinners; a community not of the righteous who know no sin, but of sinners who know it, who recognize their transgressions and ask God for forgiveness. Robert McAfee Brown writes,

Protestants do not glory in the fact that the church is a sinful community. They do glory in the fact that God deigns to dwell even within a sinful community and employ it for the doing of his will.<sup>5</sup>

The Church that is an instrument of pastoral care is itself a community which awaits completion and fulfillment. It is a community striving to be "therapeutic" in response to the needs of others, while at the same time sharing in the same fallibilities

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

and shortcomings of other institutions in society. The real test and mark of the Church is its ability to be a servant to and an instrument of God's redemptive plan in the world. Writes Colin Williams,

The question of the church can be solved only when we go beyond the church and ask the question of God's mission in the world. For the church is not an end in itself, it is the servant of the mission of God in the world, and for that reason the ecclesiological problem can be answered only indirectly.<sup>6</sup>

### The Importance and Purpose of the World in God's Redemptive Plan

The question "where in the world" is pastoral care practiced cannot be answered within the context of the church for the parameters of God's actions are broader than the visible boundaries of Christian community. The question challenges us to consider the importance and purpose of the "world" in God's redemptive plan; that is the world as (1) the arena of God's action in history; (2) the object of God's love; (3) the place where God's active presence is often manifested, even through those who are outside the fold; and (4) the goal of God's ultimate purpose. Only after one understands God's intention for the world can one discuss the relationship between Church and World and thereby establish the full context of pastoral care.

There are no narrow parameters which can circumscribe God's actions in history; not even the gates of the

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<sup>6</sup>Colin W. Williams, The Church (London, Lutterworth Press, 1969), p. 14.



Temple or the threshold of the Church. Moses heard God's call while tending his father-in-law's flocks near the desert sands of Mount Sinai (Exodus 3:1-10), as a prelude to Israel's exodus from Egypt. Jesus' ministry happened along the highways and byways between Nazareth and Jerusalem and in the context of a religious and political power struggle that involved Jewish nationalists, the religious and political leaders of the Jewish people, and authorities of the Roman empire. The Gospel is a historical narrative about worldly events, recorded through the eyes of faith by a community that has witnessed God's active presence in all dimensions of human life. The world is the stage upon which the drama of salvation is enacted. Bernhard Anderson writes in Rediscovering the Bible,

The literature of the Old and New Testaments is the deposit of a succession of historical crises in which men were faced with the question of the meaning of their existence. With stark realism the Bible describes events which rocked the very foundation of life, which destroyed nations and displaced populations, which wrought havoc, suffering, and anxiety. This drama of faith was enacted upon a stage where poor people were the victims of the rich, where Palestinian rulers were drawn into the maelstrom of international events, and where one great nation after another sought to create a world empire by the power of the sword. Situated strategically at the crossroads of the ancient world, Palestine was the very storm center of life. The Bible, therefore, does not come from a sheltered valley of Shangri-la; its message was forged out of circumstances in which people felt the maximum of tension and suffering.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Bernhard W. Anderson, Rediscovering the Bible (New York, Association Press, 1951), pp. 5-7.

The world is the arena of God's actions in history and God's creative power is manifest in all that has been made (Romans 1:20). Three Greek words in the New Testament are translated by the English "world": οἰκουμένη, -- the inhabited earth; αἰών, aeon (the accent on the time rather than the spacial dimension of the term world); and κόσμος with many nuances of meaning such as the universe, the planet earth, people, life at enmity with God, and the world as the scene of God's redemptive purpose.<sup>8</sup> Each word points to a universal dimension of God's relationship to His creation and when used in conjunction with God's activity bears witness to the fact that "the earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein" (Psalms 24). The power of God's Spirit works in all aspects of human life as well as in nature. "Whither shall I go from thy Spirit? Or wither shall I flee from thy presence....If I take the wings of the morning and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea, even there thy hand shall lead me" (Psalms 139:7-9). In the Book of Genesis God enters into a covenant relationship not just with Israel and the descendants of Abraham (Genesis 17:9-10), but also with the whole creation through Noah and his sons. Walter Eichrodt writes in Theology of the Old Testament,

not only Israel, but the whole of humanity stands to God in a berit relationship and theirs too is a berit possessing eternal validity...the relationship of God to men has been realized, as it were, in two

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<sup>8</sup>C.R. North, "The World," in George A. Buttrick, ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible, IV (New York, Abingdon Press, 1962), pp. 873-878.

concentric circles, the Noah covenant for the whole human race and the Abraham covenant for Israel alone.<sup>9</sup>

Emphasis on the universal dimensions of God's activity does not remove the scandal of particularity from the Gospel or minimize the impact of God's revelation in a unique series of events (the Exodus), to a particular chosen people (Hebrews 2:9-10), at decisive moments in history; the Cross itself being just such an event (I Corinthians 1:22-24). Rather God has chosen to work with particular people at certain times in unique ways in order that these people and/or events could point to and serve as a sign of His purpose in and for the world. The tension between the "particular" and the "universal" that is expressed throughout the whole of the Gospel when describing God's relationship to creation does not detract from the sovereignty of God's reign to the ends of the earth and the power of God's Spirit in all that has been created.

The world is also the object of God's love, for "God so loved the world that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16). Walter Eichrodt suggests that it is possible to speak of the whole earth being full of God's love (*hesed*) in reference to such verses as found in Psalms 33:5, "the earth is full of the steadfast love of the Lord."<sup>10</sup> Originally, the world was created out of

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<sup>9</sup>Walter Eichrodt, Theology of the Old Testament, trans. by J.A. Baker, I (London, SCM Press Ltd, 1961), p.58.

<sup>10</sup>Ibid., p. 239.

the love and for the love of God (Psalms 136:6). In the context of history, however, the world has fallen into the grip of demonic forces: the prince of the power of the air (Ephesians 2:2); the rulers of this age (I Corinthians 2:6); the principalities and powers (Colossians 2:15); and the god of this world (II Corinthians 4:4). The world stands in enmity to God when it is alienated and estranged from the power of God's love. This existential condition of estrangement accounts for such statements in the New Testament, particularly in Pauline and Johannine writings, which condemn the world and portray it as evil. But the world is not inherently evil -- it is always the world that God has created as good (Genesis 1:31), and remains the object of God's love. The world that the Gospel condemns for having fallen victim to the principalities and powers is still the same world that Christ enters as Savior. "Christ Jesus came to the world to save sinners" (I Timothy 1:15). The doctrine of Incarnation is the most decisive affirmation of God's eternal love for the world.

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the expiation for our sins.

I John 4:9-10

The world as the heathen world (outside the fold of the Temple, sanctuary, or religious community) is often the place where God's active presence, unexpectedly,

becomes fully manifest. The theme of God's activity "on the outside" is contained in the symbolic imagery of Jesus' birth; an event which takes place not "inside" but outside the Inn by an open stable (Luke 2:7). Jesus' ministry is to sinners and tax collectors, those outside the fold of the established religious community of the times (Luke 5:30). At one point he is placed outside the gates of his own hometown for preaching that God was present with Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, and Naaman, the Syrian, at the very moment when Israel's needs were far greater. The Old Testament likewise can speak of God's work of judgment and redemption in the actions of Cyrus of Persia and Nebuchadnezzar of Babylonia, both Kings referred to as instruments of God's purpose for Israel. The woman who anoints Jesus' head and feet with ointment, in symbolic recognition of his Messiahship, is a local prostitute. Jesus suffers and dies "outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood" (Hebrews 13:12). At the end, the purpose of his ministry in word and deed remains outside the conception of what Israel expected the Messiah's mission to be, unable as they were to perceive that the Messiah would die on the Cross "despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief" (Isaiah 53:3). Time and again, God's active presence is manifested to His people, unexpectedly, not from within the religious community itself, but outside the community in the heathen world where life is open and exposed. Colin Williams writes



in Where in the World?,

Knowing that God's purpose enfolds the whole world, and that the Church is a segment of the world which exists for the world, it also knows that God is at work in the rest of the world outside the Church; that he speaks to the world also through pagan witnesses, and that the Church must therefore watch for the signs of God's presence in the world, ready to reach out to work with God at the points where he is at work and to be open to 'humble dialogue with pagans.'<sup>11</sup>

Finally, the world is the goal of God's redemptive plan for God intends the reconciliation for all creation. The prophet Isaiah, in poetic imagery, speaks about the coming of God's final reign as a time when "every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain shall be made low" and then in strong universalist tones proclaims that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together" (Isaiah 40:4-5). The final goal of God's actions is cosmic in dimension, for there shall be a new heaven and a new earth (Isaiah 65:17 and Revelation 21:1). In Romans, St. Paul describes God's plan as one for the whole of creation which "will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). The theological correlate of the Kingdom is the World. The coming Kingdom intends the transformation of the world; it is by definition a time when God's sovereign reign extends to the ends of the earth. Envisioning this time of fulfillment the Book of Revelation declares, "The Kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord,

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<sup>11</sup>Williams, op. cit., p. 49.

and his Christ" (Revelation 11:15). The Kingdom that is already present in Jesus Christ but still yet to come is all inclusive in scope. It is, writes Paul Tillich, "a kingdom not only of men, it involves the fulfillment of life under all dimensions."<sup>12</sup> The good news of salvation is that God was in Christ "reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them" (II Corinthians 5:19). God's plan for the fullness of time begins and ends with the world.

### The Relationship Between Church and World

The relationship which exists between Church and World is a reflection of God's relationship to all creation. Our understanding of this relationship is dependent upon our perception of what God is doing in the Church and through the world to bring all things to fulfillment. The role of the Church for the world, and the purpose of the world for the Church can only be discerned and evaluated in the context of God's overall plan for salvation. A theological understanding of this relationship has been focused, in recent years, by two reports of the Department on Studies in Evangelism of the World Council of Churches: "The Church for Others" by the Western European Working Group of the Department, and "The Church for the World" by the American Working Group. These reports have been helpful in establishing a theological perspective on the problem. Several other

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<sup>12</sup>Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, III (Digswell Place, James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1968), p. 383.

books related to the study are: J.C. Hoekendijk, The Church Inside Out; George W. Webber, The Congregation in Mission; Colin Williams, Where in the World?, What in the World?, and The Church.

The basic premise of "The Church for Others" is that God's primary relationship is not to the Church but to the World. The world is the focus and the arena of God's active concern. God does not first relate Himself to the Church and then secondarily to the world; God's primary relationship is to the world-at-large. To dramatize this point the Report suggests that the formula God-Church-World be revised to read God-World-Church in order to reflect the primary thrust of God's purpose.

In the past it has been customary to maintain that God is related to the world through the Church. When we sharpen this view into a formula the sequence would be "God-Church-world. This has been understood to mean that God is primarily related to the Church and only secondarily to the world by means of the Church. Further, it has been held that God relates himself to the world through the Church in order to gather everyone possible from the world into the Church. God in other words moves through the Church to the world. We believe that the time has come to question this sequence and to emphasize an alternative. According to this alternative the last two items in God-Church-world should be reversed, so that it reads instead God-world-Church. That is, God's primary relationship is to the world, and it is the world and not the Church that is the focus of God's plan.<sup>13</sup>

The Church comes into existence as an instrument in God's plan for the world. The Church is not an end

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<sup>13</sup>Final Report of the Western European Working Group and the Report of the North American Working Group, The Church for Others and the Church for the World: A Quest for Structures for Missionary Congregations (Geneva, World Council of Churches, 1967), pp. 16-17.

to itself but a means to an end for a higher and overriding purpose. God's plan is not to fill Church pews but to fulfill the needs of the whole world. The Church lives as a vehicle in God's plan; its own goals should not be to try to exert an exclusive monopoly over it. The true marks of a church are identified by its function; its ability to be taken up into and used in God's plan for the fullness of time. God intends to deliver the Kingdom into the world and the Church exists as a midwife to this new creation. It is the Kingdom of God which defines and determines the overall goals of the Church. The function of the Church is described in its most extreme form by J.C. Hoekendijk when he writes,

It is true that the context Kingdom-apostolate-oikoumene does not leave much room for the church. Ecclesiology does not fit here. When one desires to speak about God's dealings with the world, the church can be mentioned only in passing and without strong emphasis. Ecclesiology cannot be more than a single paragraph from Christology (the Messianic dealings with the world) and a few sentences from eschatology (the Messianic dealings with the World). The church is only the church to the extent that she lets herself be used as a part of God's dealings with the oikoumene....The church cannot be more than a sign. She points away from herself to the kingdom; she lets herself be used for and through the kingdom in the oikoumene. There is nothing that the church can demand for herself and can possess for herself (not an ecclesiology either).<sup>14</sup>

The Church's role in the world is an extension of Christ's role as Messiah. The role is best described as one of servanthood. The Church exists as a servant to the

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<sup>14</sup>J.C. Hoekendijk, The Church Inside Out, trans. by Isaac C. Rottenberg (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1967), pp. 38, 41.



world in the same way that Christ lived as a servant to others. The role is expressed in Philippians,

Have this mind among yourselves, which you have in Christ Jesus who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

The Church's role is a humble one; it works continually to be a servant in service to others as an instrument in a larger plan. A church that participates in God's plan for the world is one that seeks to empty itself of all self-interest and self-aggrandizement and point to the needs of others as they exist in the world.

A Church for others is a congregation that is structured for outreach and mission. Not every congregation is structured in a way that best facilitates and maximizes opportunities for service. Many congregations are apt to be introverted, inward-looking, self-enclosed with an obsession for self-preservation. Some churches are too curved in upon themselves as islands of self-sufficient order to hear the call. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations" (Matthew 28:19). When outreach is undertaken it tends to be devised as a plan to draw people into church membership, narrowly conceived, rather than out into the world in mission. Here again, the report "The Church for Others" has been helpful in analyzing the problem. The report says,

The Church lives in order that the world may know



its true being. It is *pars pro toto*: it is the first fruits of the new creation. But its centre lies outside itself; it must live 'ex-centredly'. It has to seek out those situations in the world that call for loving responsibility and there it must announce and point to shalom. This excentric position of the Church implies that we must stop thinking from the inside towards the outside.<sup>15</sup>

Pastoral care cannot be viewed as a process of binding and ingrafting parishioners into institutional structures in a Church that is a servant in God's mission of reconciliation to the world. Ministry cannot be a process of 'churchification' in a community which views itself as a means to an end in God's plan. A program of pastoral ministry cannot be directed to those "inside the fold" in a community that comes into existence in service to others.

A Church for others is in an ongoing state of change because it takes formation around the changing shapes of human need. The Church's task is to discover those forms of institutional life that best enable the Church to minister to problems in the community. Professional architects often speak of "form following function" in architectural design. The Church's form must likewise follow from its function in God's plan for human fulfillment; creating and recreating its own structures in response to the problems encountered in the world. The form of the Church is dependent upon the problems which exist within its sphere of influence. The Church hears God's voice as it listens to the cries of human distress

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<sup>15</sup>The Church for Others, op. cit., p. 18.

in the world; it functions as a Church as it responds to God's call as an instrument in His redemptive plan.

Thus, the primary context of pastoral care is the Church-in-the-world; a church that is continually taking shape and formation around problems that are encountered in the world within person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community relationships. Pastoral care takes place in a Church that is itself deeply immersed in the world. The Church is the setting for pastoral ministry but the Church is only the Church to the extent that it is an instrument in God's plan for the world. It is the role and purpose of a Church that exists for others that shapes the nature and function of pastoral care.

Where does pastoral care take place? Pastoral care happens at the crossroads of life, down in the market place, at all those junctures where men and women are most estranged from God's love. When the Church encounters pain, sickness, suffering, and alienation in the world, there is where pastoral care is needed. Pastoral care is needed wherever there are problems which obstruct God's plan for human fulfillment. The Church-in-the-world is the Church for the world, listening to cries of human distress, emptying itself of self-interest and aggrandizement, always taking servant form in relation to worldly needs and world-wide problems. Who is our neighbor? The one who cries for help. Where is that happening? In the world,...

## Chapter 15

God's Plan for the Fullness of Time

How, where, and why, these are the three questions around which we have structured a theological framework for understanding pastoral care. "How" raises the question of method and the relationship between the word and the deed. "Where" focuses on the problem of context and the relationship between the Church and the World. "Why" asks the question of the reason and purpose for pastoral care; in other words why we engage in a pastoral ministry of word-in-deed in the setting of the Church-in-the-world. A preliminary answer to this question is that pastoral care exists as a problem-solving ministry aimed at resolving problems in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community situations which stand in the way of God's plan for the fullness of time; a plan made manifest in Jesus Christ and one which summons those who hear to ministry in preparation for the final reconciliation of all in all through Him. "For in (Christ) all the fulness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven" (Colossians 1:19-20). The imperative for pastoral care begins with the indicative of God's promise. God's Promise to the World

The promise is contained in the theological affirmation that God is working in the world to make all things new. "Behold, I am doing a new thing, now it springs forth, do you not perceive it" (Isaiah 43:19). "Behold,

I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5)... The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the Father of Jesus Christ, is the Lord who has taken the initiative to bring forth the new (novum) out of nothingness, that which is wholly New despite the immediate and visible presence of sin, suffering, and death in the world. This promise is repeated with different images throughout the whole of Scripture. The prophet Jeremiah tells us that the days are coming when a "new covenant" shall be made with the house of Israel (Jeremiah 31:31). Ezekiel describes the day when God shall give His people "one heart and put a new spirit within them" (Ezekiel 11:19). Isaiah announces the imminent arrival of "the new heaven and the new earth" and a time when "former things shall not be remembered or come to mind" (Isaiah 65:19). Every major affirmation of the Gospel proclaims the arrival of the New: a new creation, new wineskins, a new blessing, a new song, the new age, the new humanity, and the new city, Jerusalem. The meaning of New Testament is the New Covenant (I Corinthians 11:25, II Corinthians 3:6), Hebrews 8:8), through which God, acting in Jesus Christ, has created one new man (Ephesians 2:15). God who is Lord and Sovereign over all creation is the same God who works in the midst of human affairs to transform every dimension of life into the Kingdom of the New. The New Testament is the historical witness to the promise of a new creation in Jesus Christ.

The announcement of the New is the promise that an

old age (aeon) is dying and a new age is about to begin. The Kingdom of God is now breaking into the midst of time and history. "The time is fulfilled and the Kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15). The Gospel proclaims that the "old" has lost its power over human life and the "new" has come into being; that old patterns of human behavior are being transformed into new modes of encounter, old structures of dehumanization into new forms of wholeness. Jesus says to his disciples, "Go and tell John what you hear and see, the blind recover their sight and the lame walk, lepers are cleansed and the deaf hear" (Matthew 11:4-5). The inbreaking thrust of the Kingdom is already giving new form to the structures and dynamics of human interrelatedness which impede the realization of God's promise. This promise is described in the Bible as a time of shalom.

Shalom describes human life in the context of the Kingdom of God. It is a time of unity, wholeness, and well-being; a time of right-relationships between people when the divisions which separate race from race, nation from nation, and individuals from each other are reconciled in the new creation of a just social order. Shalom is not just the absence of war and the cessation of interpersonal conflict but is a time of positive well-being and fulfillment at a personal, interpersonal, and societal level of existence. The promise of peace in the Gospel is directed to both the "in-between" of human relationships and the "within" of human personality. The



words of Jesus are spoken to the human heart, symbol of the whole person in the context of a whole society.

"Peace I leave with you, my peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid" (John 14:27). Shalom is the promise that the endless wars of contradiction which rage within the human soul and the endless wars of violence which rage within society will be quelled through a total transformation of human life. The goal of shalom is personal, social, and even cosmic in scope.

#### God's Act of Redemption in Jesus Christ

God's promise to the world is actualized in the life of Jesus Christ; in Christ, God's plan for the world is made fully manifest. Christ is the mediator between human life as it is, under the conditions of sin, and life as it ought to be.<sup>1</sup> In Him the irreparable breach between existence and essence, reality and possibility is bridged. "God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him" (I John 4:9). The Christ Event marks the essential beginning of at/one/ment between God and the World; the coming together of all things that have formerly been estranged. The atoning work of Jesus Christ mediates the transformation process from human interaction as it exists, broken and estranged to life as it is meant to be

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<sup>1</sup>For a more detailed discussion of the doctrine of atonement and Christ's role as "Mediator" see the following books: Emil Brunner, The Mediator, trans. by Olive Wyon (Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1947); Paul Tillich, Systematic Theology, II (Digswell Place, James Nisbet and Co., Ltd., 1968); and Gustaf Aulén, Christus Victor, trans. by A.G. Herbert (New York, MacMillan Co., 1951).

with the establishment of shalom.

The Cross is the pivotal turning point in the drama of salvation. It is on the Cross that the "principalities and powers" in institutional, social, political, and interpersonal manifestation are defeated. Here God has "disarmed the principalities and powers and made a public example of them, triumphing over them in him" (Colossians 2:15). By remaining obedient to God even during temptation, by giving his life as a sacrifice and dying unto the power of death, Jesus has broken the authority of the "forces of oppression" which block the full realization of human life and love in society. Through his own death, Christ Jesus has triumphed over the power of death and delivered into the Kingdom of shalom "all those who through fear of death were subject to life long bondage" (Hebrews 2:14-15).

The Cross is the moment of exposure; the Resurrection is the moment of victory. The Cross is the point in history where God's love in Christ is most fully exposed to the forces of alienation and estrangement in the world. The Resurrection is the moment when the power of eternal life breaks into history in fullest intensity. The forces of alienation and estrangement are defeated on the Cross because there is where God's suffering love was most vulnerable yet where, at the same time, the power of eternal life was most fully present. The Cross of Jesus becomes the battlefield where the forces of darkness

concentrate to defeat the power of love and life and are in turn defeated. God transforms the appearance of defeat into triumph. "He has delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the Kingdom of his beloved Son" (Colossians 1:13-14). The most powerful expression of Divine Agape is the sacrificial death of Christ on the Cross; the most decisive outpouring of eternal life happens in the Resurrection of Christ from the Cross.

The event of the Cross and the Resurrection is experienced by the believer as an act of liberation and reconciliation. On the Cross the world is liberated from all the forces which stand in the way of human life becoming fully human: "principalities and powers" (Colossians 2:15); "the rulers of this age" (I Corinthians 2:1); "god of this world" (II Corinthians 4:4); and "the world rulers of this present darkness" (Ephesians 6:12). The Cross is experienced as liberation from the psychological forces which prevent human relationships from becoming whole, and liberation from the social structures and institutions which prevent the establishment of justice and wholeness in the community. The event is also experienced as an act of reconciliation. The Resurrection restores the power of life and love in all its fullness through the outpouring of the Spirit. The inbreaking of God's Kingdom in the presence of Christ reunites life with life and all that is estranged. Liberation and reconciliation are two interrelated dimensions of the

same experience as one is incorporated into God's redemptive plan in Christ.

God's work of at/one/ment in Jesus Christ creates the possibility for healing and the occasion for pastoral care. Faith in God's action through Christ is the belief that the "structures of alienation" and the "dynamics of destruction" which impede human growth through inter-relatedness have lost their power over human life. The Christ Event opens up new possibilities for transformation in every problem situation. There are no problems so burdensome, no conditions so fate-like, no institutions so oppressive that they cannot be renewed by the power of God's love in Christ. We are no longer enslaved to the past or to former patterns of interaction and behavior. No matter what sins we have done or left undone, the past cannot tyrannize the present in the presence of a God who makes all things new. The future is open because Christ has bridged the irreparable gap between existence and essence; between what is and what can be in the presence of shalom. The existence of destructive dynamics within human relationships and forces of alienation within the structures of society at large can no longer be accepted as determinative of the future in light of what God has done in Christ. Help is possible because hope is real for those who experience the change-over in the dominion of power on the Cross.

#### God's Plan for the Fullness of Time

God's plan is His intention for the whole creation;



the work of God's will in history. The plan encompasses the whole drama of salvation from beginning to end, creation to final consummation. What the Book of Ephesians refers to as "the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God" (Ephesians 3:9), is in fact the Word of God revealed to the prophets and the apostles, made manifest in Jesus Christ, and working to uphold the universe by its power (Hebrews 1:3). God's plan for the fullness of time is to reconcile all things in the love of Jesus Christ. The purpose of this plan is clearly set forth in the first chapter of Ephesians:

For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

Ephesians 1:9-10

The movement of history under the sovereignty of God is toward the final reconciliation of all in all. Paul Tillich speaks of grace as the "reunion of life with life"<sup>2</sup> and of love as "the drive towards the unity of the separated."<sup>3</sup> The power of God's love and grace works in the world to bring all that is alienated, separated, and estranged towards reconciliation. "For from him and through him, and to him are all things" (Romans 11:36). The visible world of human society is still caught between the principalities and powers but the hidden movement

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<sup>2</sup>Paul Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations (New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), p. 156.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Tillich, Love, Power, and Justice (London, Oxford University Press, 1972), p. 25.



of history is towards ultimate reconciliation in shalom. God's plan encompasses the totality of his purpose: "to reconcile to himself all things whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross" (Colossians 1:20).

This plan of reconciliation is all-inclusive in scope and its parameters are universal and cosmic. God's plan for the world includes the whole of creation "because the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21). The word "pantes" that is found in the affirmation "Behold I make all things new" (Revelation 21:5), means "all" ---it cannot be translated as "some." When St. Paul says that "as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive" (I Corinthians 15:22), he is adopting a universalist perspective. There is no exclusive way of demarcating the range and scope of God's concern and plan for the world. The dimensions of His love in Jesus Christ are social, political, interpersonal, and cosmic because the object of God's plan is reconciliation of all in all.

All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

II Corinthians 5:18-19

God's plan for the fullness of time is to bring all life to fulfillment, as measured by "the fulness of him who fills all in all" (Ephesians 1:23), and "the

stature of the fulness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:13). God intends the full development of human life in its potential for wholeness. The new humanity in Jesus Christ is the first fruits of life's fullness in the fullness of time. "For in him the whole fulness of deity dwells bodily, and you have come to fulness of life in him, who is the head of all rule and authority" (Colossians 2:9-10). God works in the world to make and keep human life fully human; an act of salvation which draws the whole world into the process of humanization.<sup>4</sup> George W. Webber writes in The Congregation in Mission,

This is precisely what the Christian faith is all about. God, the Christian confesses, is at work in the world to redeem men, to restore them to their true humanity, and to maintain them in this relationship.<sup>5</sup>

But God's plan is not a blueprint that programs every facet of human behavior. To conceive of God's plan for human fulfillment as a pre-determined program for human interaction would be to destroy the concept of free will, a concept essential to an understanding of human beings as responsible creatures before God. Without free will and the freedom of choice, human beings would not be responsible for their own actions and decisions. Programming is for computers, not for human beings who

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<sup>4</sup>Paul Lehmann, Ethics in a Christian Context (New York, Harper and Row, Publishers, 1963), pp. 74-101. Lehmann uses the formula, "to make and keep life fully human" and variations on this theme throughout his book to express what God is doing in the world.

<sup>5</sup>George W. Webber, The Congregation in Mission: Emerging Structures for the Church in an Urban World (Nashville, Abingdon Press, 1964), p. 49.

are able to be intentional about the direction of their lives. We encounter God's plan for the fullness of time not as a detailed program with established roles but as a call to decision and participation in the hidden movement of history toward reconciliation. We can decide to participate in this plan under the guidance of the Holy Spirit or we can refuse involvement; we can respond to its power of life or we can remain in a state of estrangement and separation. Just as the Spirit is free to move where it wills, so too are we free to respond as we will. God's actions in the world are moments of opportunity for living life fully in the fullness of time.

#### Pastoral Care and Christian Ministry

Pastoral care is an act of Christian ministry which takes place in the context of the Church-in-the-world; a Church taking form and shape around human needs as they manifest themselves in society. It is practiced by members of the Church as one dimension of ministry related to but distinct from other modes: preaching, teaching, worship, administration, and management. The mark of differentiation is that pastoral ministry is directed to problems that occur in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community situations; problems which stand in the way of God's plan for reconciliation in the world. Pastoral care is a problem-solving ministry.

The Church's ministry is the response that it makes to God's active presence in the world. Ministry is doing the will of God that God has willed to be done.

"Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven " commands the Lord's Prayer and the Gospel of John states, "if any man's will is to do his will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God" (John 7:17). Christian men and women encounter God in Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour and in response they are called forth to participate in "the ministry of reconciliation" (II Corinthians 5:18). The Church's ministry is the response that it makes to God's plan to make and keep human life fully human; it develops as the Church struggles to take shape and form around problems encountered in community life.

The concepts in the Gospel which describe ministry emphasize "intentional" action; actions that are not purposeless but rather goal directed. Ministry is servanthood or "diakonia", the self-emptying of oneself in service to others, even at the risk of one's own self interests. Ministry is an extension of God's love that has been given to us. "Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another" (I John 4:11). The call to ministry takes its point of departure from the Great Commandment "to love one's neighbor as oneself" (Mark 12:30-31). Christian ministry is an act of love intentionally directed, in response to God's universal love for humankind, made manifest in Jesus Christ. "Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself for us" (Ephesians 5:1-2).

Christ's own ministry is described in the Gospel as

one of healing: "the blind receive their sight and the lame walk" (Matthew 11:5). This command is likewise given by Christ to his disciples. The Gospel of Matthew says that he called the twelve together and gave them authority "to heal every disease and every infirmity" (Matthew 10:2). Jesus is known as the physician to the sick reaching out not to those who are well but those who are sick and in need of healing.

And when Jesus heard it, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I came not to call the righteous, but the sinners."

Mark 2:17

Ministry, however, takes place within the broader context of God's plan for liberation and reconciliation in the world. From this perspective contemporary ministry is best described as interaction in quest of liberation and reconciliation in fulfillment of God's intention. The motif of "liberation" is central in Christ's understanding of his own ministry, as seen in the choice of text while preaching in the synagogue at Nazareth.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:18-19

A ministry of liberation is one that attempts to free people from bondage to social oppression; from the shackles of economic exploitation; from relationships of submission and manipulation; from structures of injustice and patterns of dehumanization; from the fate-like grip



that multiple conditions of deprivation have over people's lives. Liberation is freedom from the social barriers which block the way to human fulfillment in a whole society,

Ministry also involves reconciliation. The struggle for liberation and reconciliation are interdependent dimensions of ministry; two sides of the same healing act within the context of society. Reconciliation without liberation and freedom would merely be another form of surrender to the conditions of the status quo. Liberation without reconciliation, on the other hand, would exist as an endless struggle of negation and conflict in the absence of love and eventual unity. Liberation must conclude in reconciliation if freedom is to be preserved in the context of a new society; reconciliation must be preceded by liberation if reunion is to be just and whole. A ministry of reconciliation is one which re-forms the totality of human society by reuniting people with each other, with themselves, and with God.

Christian ministry is the act of being intentional about one's faith in anticipation of the coming of God's Kingdom. The essence of Jesus' message is the call for human response to the demands of this Kingdom. Ministry is purposeful direction of one's life in a way that enables one to be an instrument in God's redemptive plan to make life fully human. An intentional ministry is not an ethic of "works" in the absence of "grace"; rather it is ministry directed by the goals and priorities of the Gospel. It is pro-active service (*diakonia*) in

pursuit of shalom in response to God's call to "seek first his kingdom and his righteousness" (Matthew 6:33). The opposite of intentionality is not grace but apathy, passivity, and purposelessness. The Christian who practices intentional ministry is someone who is deliberate about his or her choices and decisions in relation to God's plan for human fulfillment. The overall sense of intentionality is captured in Matthew 7:13-14, "Enter by the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the way easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way hard, that leads to life."

Intentional actions are directed by the demands of a goal. Christian ministry points towards and strains after the establishment of shalom with the coming of the Kingdom of God. Much in the same way that Abraham and his people went forward into an unknown land, not knowing where they were to go, contemporary ministry is movement towards the future of God's promise. This promise announces the beginning of the Kingdom in the presence of Christ but the event of fulfillment is still far from completed. Therefore, ministry moves out in quest for the completion of God's plan to bring all creation to the point of reconciliation. It is an on-going search and struggle for the future that is yet to be. Jürgen Moltmann writes,

Man's hopes and longings and desires, once awakened by specific promises, stretch further than any fulfillment that can be conceived or experienced.

However limited the promises may be, once we have caught in them a whiff of the future, we remain restless and urgent, seeking and searching beyond all experiences of fulfilment, and the latter leave us an aftertaste of sadness. The 'not yet' of expectation surpasses every fulfilment that is already taking place now,. Hence every reality in which a fulfilment is already taking place now, becomes the confirmation, exposition and liberation of a greater hope.<sup>6</sup>

### Pastoral Care as a Problem-Solving Ministry

Pastoral care, in distinction from other forms of Christian ministry, is directed to problems that are encountered in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community situations which stand in the way of God's plan for human fulfillment. St. Paul speaks of "the dividing walls of hostility" which have separated us from Christ, alienated us from the commonwealth of Israel, and made us strangers to the covenants of promise (Ephesians 2:12-14). Human life is full of obstacles and barriers which block our best attempts to achieve wholeness in and through human interrelatedness. These obstacles manifest themselves in daily life as problems. A problem emerges as the initial frustration of being unable to complete a desired goal or fulfill a basic need. The immediate problem is often the surface and visible dimension of deeper psychological, social, and spiritual dynamics which impede the full expression of life and the possibilities for human growth. The problem-situation then becomes the specific embodiment of the more extensive forces of alienation and estrangement embedded in the society at large.

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<sup>6</sup>Jürgen Moltmann, Theology of Hope: On the Ground and the Implications of a Christian Eschatology (London, SCM Press Ltd., 1967), pp. 105-106.

Problems exist as a form of separation: the three-fold separation of human beings from others, from self, and from God. Problem situations reflect the divisions within society between race and race, nation and nation, rich and poor, male and female, those inside and outside the fold. It is said that our lives are shaped by those who love us and those who refuse or are unable to reciprocate our initial love. When love is rejected or not forthcoming, walls and barriers emerge between people blocking communication and interaction that is essential if human life is to be fully human. Paul Tillich writes,

The most irrevocable expression of the separation of life from life today is the attitude of social groups within nations towards each other, and the attitude of nations themselves towards other nations. The walls of distance, in time and space, have been removed by technical progress; but the walls of estrangement between heart and heart have been incredibly strengthened.<sup>7</sup>

Second, problems are a reflection of people's separation from self. Alienation and estrangement penetrates not only to the "in-between" of interpersonal relationships but also reaches deep "within" the inner recesses of the human heart. The temptation to sin, to separate ourselves from self, is inherent in our freedom to make choices either for good or for evil. Within the possibilities that freedom presents lie the seeds of potential self destruction when the self becomes a god unto itself in an act of idolatry. The war of

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<sup>7</sup>Tillich, The Shaking of the Foundations, op. cit., p. 157.



contradictions that rage within the heart can paralyze intentional movement towards shalom when the self curves in upon itself in a demonic quest for self-aggrandizement. St. Paul expresses the contradiction in this way:

I do not understand my own actions. For I do not what I want, but I do the very thing I hate... For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want, is what I do.

Romans 7:15,18

Third, problems reflect our separation from God as the ground and source of life in all its fullness. We have cut ourselves off from God's love, agape, and are therefore unable to express love in our interpersonal relationships with others. We have broken the covenant that was first extended to us and have erred and strayed from His ways like lost sheep. We have separated ourselves from God's freely bestowed grace and acceptance, and as a result cannot accept our own-selves and the selfhood of others. The Anglican confessions of sin express for liturgical purposes the nature of our estrangement.

Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word and deed: we have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We pray you of your mercy forgive what we have been, amend what we are, direct what we shall be; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.<sup>8</sup>

Problem-solving is the way that people who are caught in psychological, social, and existential bondage struggle

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<sup>8</sup>The Standing Liturgical Commission, Services for Trial Use: Authorized Alternatives to Prayer Book Services (New York, The Church Hymnal Corporation, 1971), p. 63.



against the "walls" which stand in the way of God's plan. The resolving of problems is the deliberate attempt to remove all obstacles which block human fulfillment in person-to-person, person-to-group, person-in-community living situations. It is a process of breaking down old patterns of behavior and modes of being which dehumanize life and creating new structures for interaction which humanize life. The process begins as persons in a problem situation come together to focus on specific barriers that impede a desired goal. Gradually the problem is worked with the establishment of new goals and objects and the undertaking of initial steps to try out plans of action. Success in small, clearly defined tasks brings confidence for larger undertakings. Every specific problem is directly or indirectly related to systemic problems which affect the total life of the community. Once begun, problem-solving becomes an on-going task of reformation; the discovery of new forms and patterns of interaction that enable people to live life fully in the fullness of time.

When problem-solving is directed by the goals and priorities of the Gospel, it becomes a mode and vehicle of Christian ministry. Resolving problems faithfully is one way of being intentional about the demands of ministry. God's plan and mission to the world in Jesus Christ is to remove obstacles which block the full expression of Agape love and the movement of history towards reconciliation. Problem-solving is a stepping

stone to the fulfillment of this plan when infused with the power of the Spirit and directed in quest of shalom. The nature of the problem-solving process is colored by the object of its intent. Within the context of God's plan for human fulfillment problem-solving is ministry in anticipation of God's Kingdom. God's plan for the fullness of time summons us to an intentional ministry; and problem-solving, as an instrument of this plan is an expression of pastoral love.

Pastoral care is a problem-solving ministry in response to God's promise "to make all things new" by "Making a way in the wilderness" (Isaiah 43:19). God acts in the world and in the midst of human events for a purpose: to remove the obstacles which stand in the way of human life becoming fully human. God's mission of liberation and reconciliation in the world is directed to the problems which block the full realization of human life in the context of human interrelatedness. God prepares the way by working to transform the personal, interpersonal, and communal dimensions of life into new dynamics, forms, structures, patterns, and organizations which are just and whole. The God who can "Make a way in the wilderness" is the God who can mediate the gap between reality and hope, existence and essence in the fulfillment of His plan.

Pastoral care is a problem-solving ministry to help in preparing the way. Pastoral ministry is an instrument and vehicle for preparation.

Go through, go through the gates,  
prepare the way for the people;  
build up, build up the highway,  
clear it of stones, lift up an  
ensign over the peoples

Isaiah 62:10

Caught somewhere between sickness and health, apathy and excitement, alienation and reconciliation, war and peace, promise and fulfillment, humankind "groans" in the midst of problems which obstruct the full outpouring of God's love and the fulfillment of God's purpose in the world. And until that day of fulfillment, problem-solving will continue to be necessary as an essential aspect of pastoral ministry that is preparing the way of the Lord; that day when God's plan is finally fulfilled in the fullness of time.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis reflects the impact of two formative experiences. The first experience happened in the process of doing pastoral ministry in the setting of a small inner city church. It was the growing awareness that the primary reality of every day life for persons in the parish was a "social" reality, and that people's lives were touched and interconnected in ways that even they were not fully conscious. We learned to understand that people are who they are because of the ways they relate to others and to the world and that we all live and move and have our being in a social milieu which surrounds us much like the ocean envelops its own inhabitants. What it meant to be fully human in the community was directly related to how persons met their basic needs in and through an ever-widening circle of social interactions beginning in the family and extending into the neighborhood at large. Life was a social enterprise of diverse encounters within the home, on the street, and in the marketplace. We concluded that the practice of pastoral ministry could not ignore these subtle and complex interrelationships between persons and their social environment. Birth and death, growth and development, being and becoming were happening in social context.

The second experience occurred while reflecting about what we were doing as healing agents in the name of the Christian Church. It was the search for a theoretical and theological frame of reference to guide and focus our efforts

at pastoral ministry. This quest ended with the discovery that there was relatively little literature coherent with our own experiences in the parish. In specific, we discovered no viable models in pastoral theology which treated the problem of interconnecting the personal and the social -- the individual and the corporate -- in a comprehensive and integrated way. The marked tendency of most theories was to portray human life in a vacuum; to describe individuals in isolation with little reference to the social context of every day life. During our readings we encountered theories of personal renewal but few models which articulated a corresponding need for the transformation of a sick society. The textbooks described human nature in atomistic perspective; a perspective we believed to be distorted by an implicit exaggeration of personal independence without recognition of human interdependence.

Our response has been to formulate a problem-solving model for pastoral care. The model draws upon insights from many of the foremost thinkers in social philosophy: John Dewey, Martin Buber, Anna Freud, and Helen Perlman. The basic components include a theory of human growth and behavior (Part II); a theory of intervention (Part III); and a theological frame of reference (Part IV and Part V). In constructing this model we have been particularly helped by theories of social work practice in Great Britain and America; especially the three-fold method of social work intervention called casework, group work and community work.

The three-fold focus of pastoral care on individuals,



groups, and the community at large has added an important dimension to ministry. First, the model has helped to clarify many of the interconnections which exist between the "personal" and the "social" and has provided some conceptual tools for avoiding a false bifurcation of these two interrelated realms. Second, the three-fold model has offered to members of the church a style of intervention which is priestly and prophetic in nature -- namely, a style of ministering to individuals through interpersonal support and care, and a way of challenging and transforming the broad contours of society as a whole. Third, the model has given pastoral care a change-centered focus aimed at translating thought into action in the on-going act of praxis. Problem-solving, through case work, group work, and community work, has given people a way of becoming intentional about the goals of Christian ministry.

During the course of our study it has also become clear that the success of the problem-solving model, as well as any other model, is ultimately dependent on its ability to express the dynamics and purpose of God's actions in the world. It is the theological framework of pastoral theory which sets the context for practice and in the last analysis prevents a model from presenting a distorted picture of the individual in relationship to society. The narrow focus of pastoral theory upon individuals -- in vacuum, in quest of personal renewal -- without context, was a failure to take seriously the scope and parameters of God's plan for the world. Thus, the starting point for

model-building must always be the theological question, "What is God doing in the world to make and keep human life fully human?" When the style and method of pastoral care is a response to the indicative of God's plan, it is a reflection of how God's Word is revealed in the world (Chapter 13); where God's Word is encountered in the world (Chapter 14); and the goals of God's mission to the world (Chapter 15). Only when the theological bridge between God, Christ and the World is established does the importance of social context in pastoral care become perfectly clear.

A final word needs to be said about the implementation of this model. The thesis has given no details of specific guidelines for implementing a problem-solving ministry in a local church setting. If a chapter had been devoted to the "nuts and bolts" of implementation it would have focused on the importance of small group ministries in the practice of pastoral care. Many churches already have mutual ministry groups or koinonia groups for this very task. Our hope would be that such groups would use the basic steps of cooperative problem-solving both to facilitate process with the group itself, and then, from this base, to reach out in ministry to individuals, groups, and the needs of the community at large. Perhaps the sequel to this thesis will be a manual or workbook discussing in detail how these small groups would function in applying themselves to the tasks of cooperative problem-solving. Suffice it to say that as the problem-solving model becomes more integrated into the on-going life of the group, ministry

itself can become more intentional and thereby more responsive to the demands and goals of God's intentions for fulfillment in Christ.

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